AUSTRALIA'S SPORTING MAGAZINE

INSIDE SPORT



BENNETT *and the* BROADCOS

BACK IN THE SADDLE

BERNARD FOLEY'S SAFE HANDS



SPORT VS TERROR

A NOT-SO-RADICAL IDEA

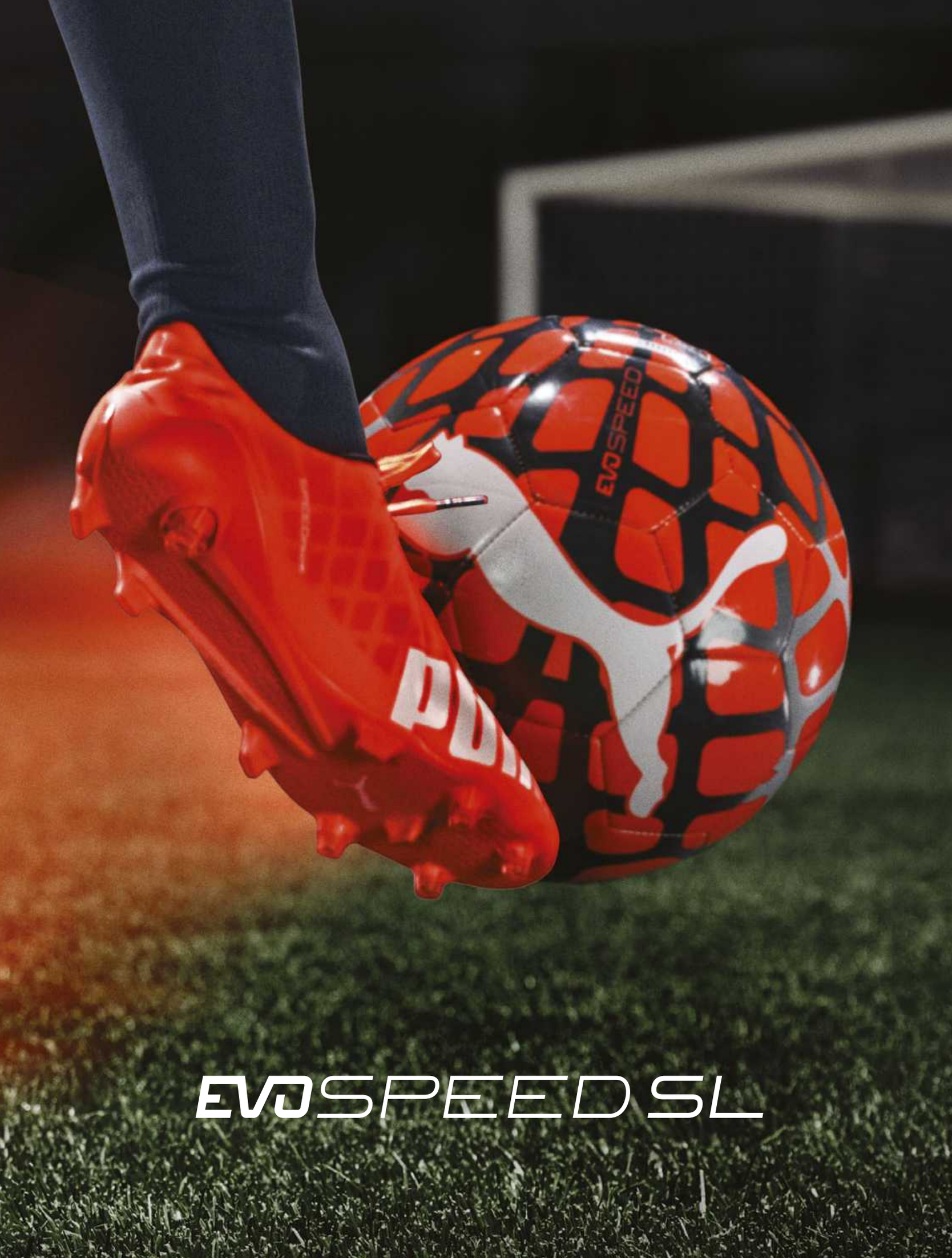
AFL'S MOST UNLIKELY CHAMPIONS

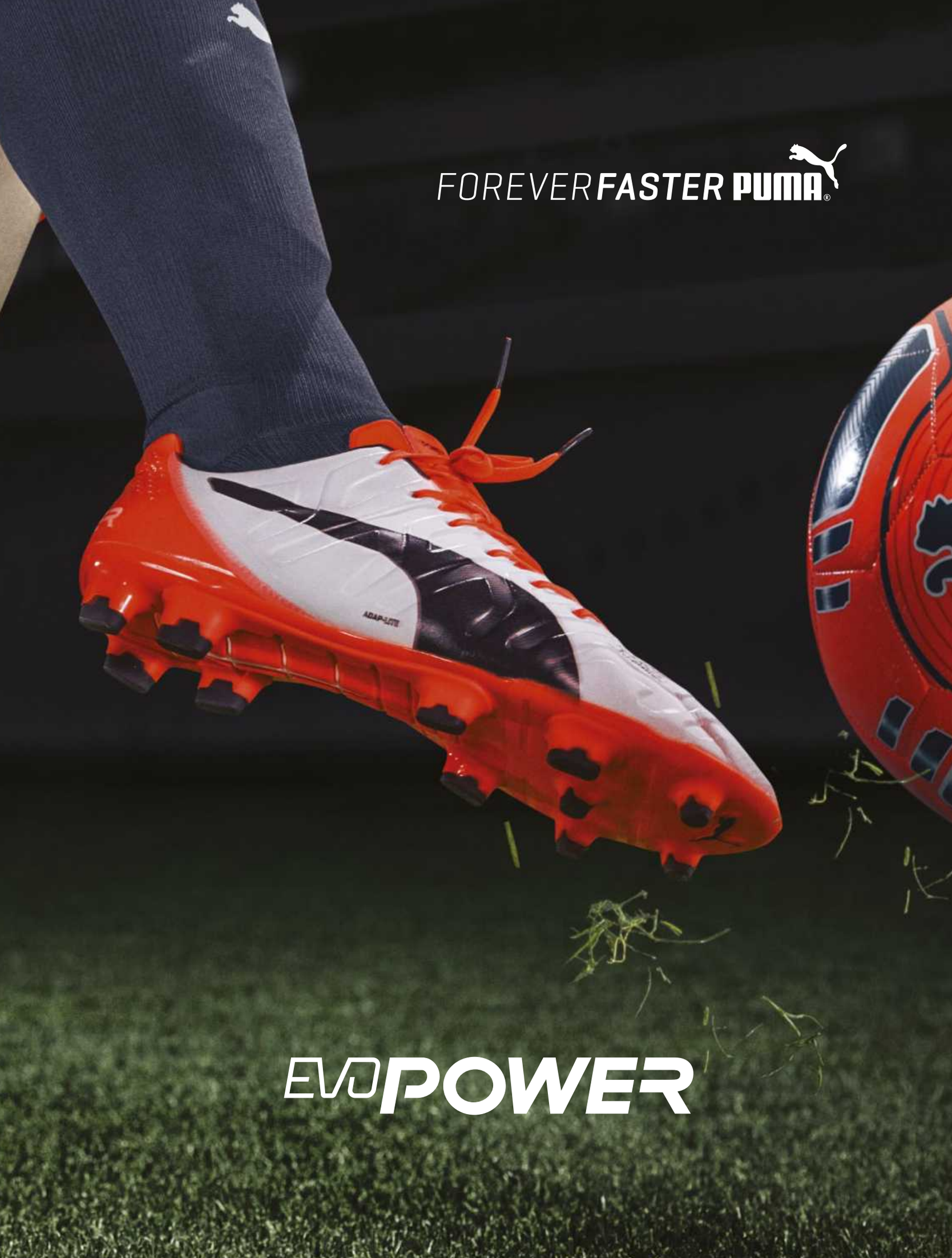
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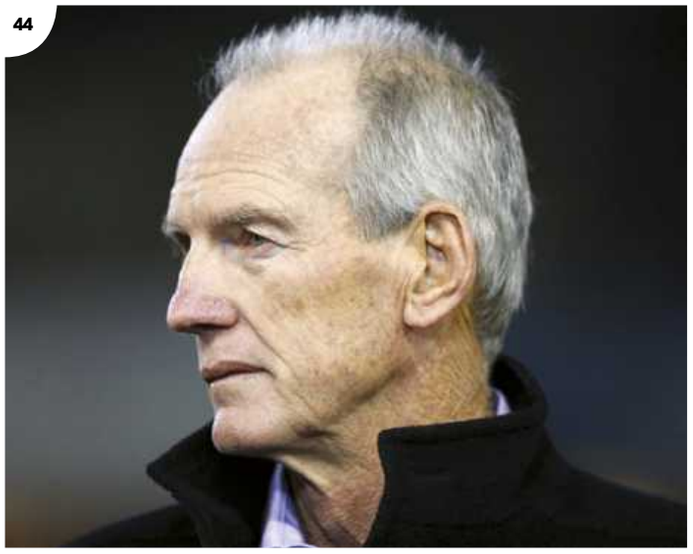
COMMITTED TO THE GAME

James O'Connor



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Politicians are talking about ways to connect disengaged Muslim youth with society at large. Maybe they should simply talk sport?

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EDITOR Graem Sims
graems@insidesport.com.au

ART DIRECTOR Allan Bender
allanb@insidesport.com.au

DEPUTY EDITOR Jeff Centenera
jcentenera@insidesport.com.au

ASSISTANT EDITOR/ONLINE EDITOR
James Smith
jamess@insidesport.com.au

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Matt Cleary, Robert Drane,
Ramy Haidar

Inside Sport on the web
www.insidesport.com.au

EDITORIAL ENQUIRIES:
Insidesport@insidesport.com.au, (02) 9901 6100

ADVERTISING

Hamish Bayliss
Head of Sport
Tel:(02) 9901 6176
Mob: 0411 057 327
hbayliss@nextmedia.com.au

NSW: Mark Watkins
Ad Manager - Sport
Mob: 0410 418 052
mwatkins@nextmedia.com.au

NSW: Adam Jackson
Brand and Ad Manager - Sport.
Tel: (02) 9901 6109
Mob: 0431 212 504
ajackson@nextmedia.com.au

QLD: Damian Martin
Queensland Ad Manager
Mob: 0417 168 663
dmartin@nextmedia.com.au

VIC: Peter Curtin
Victorian Ad Manager
Tel: (03) 5984 4394
Mob: 0409 337 736
pcurtin@nextmedia.com.au

Ryan Coombs
Advertising Sales Manager
Tel: (02) 9901 6379
Mob: 0449 671 738
rcoombs@nextmedia.com.au

Prepress Manager Jonathan Bishop
Production Manager Alison Begg
Circulation Director Carole Jones

SUBSCRIPTIONS
www.mymagazines.com.au
Toll free 1300 361 146 or +61 2 9901 6111
Locked Bag 3355, St Leonards NSW 1590

nextmedia
Level 6, Building A, 207 Pacific Highway, St Leonards NSW 2065
Locked Bag 5555 St Leonards NSW 1590
Chief Executive Officer David Gardiner
Commercial Director Bruce Duncan

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SPORT DOES HOLD A MIRROR UP TO SOCIETY, AND VERY OFTEN WE DON'T LIKE WHAT WE ARE SEEING.



I FEEL IT'S SAFE to say that it's been a particularly turbulent month in the world of sport. As is so often the case, the on-field action has well and truly spilled over the sidelines and into the crowd "conversation". Racism, corruption, bigotry, bullying – sport does indeed hold a mirror up to society, and very often we don't like what we are seeing. Just don't *blame* sport.

Ramy Haidar has written some fine pieces for this magazine in recent years, even collecting an Australian Sports Commission Media Award last year for the "Best analysis of the business of sport". He's back in this issue with a candidate for another gong in this year's awards. In "Dropping The Ball", he steps into one of the most controversial discussions occupying everyone from the Prime Minister down: how do we as a society engage Muslim youth and make them feel a part of this nation? How do we discourage their exclusion and potential radicalisation?

He has a not-so-radical idea: sport! As a Muslim himself, Ramy understands that Islamic doctrine supports the practice of sport, contrary to the perceptions of some. As a sports fan, he has looked around for Muslim athletes at the elite end of sport – and found a dearth. As an academic (he teaches Media Studies), he has examined the reasons why and produced a challenging insight that should be read by every sports administrator in the land. His story begins on page 66.

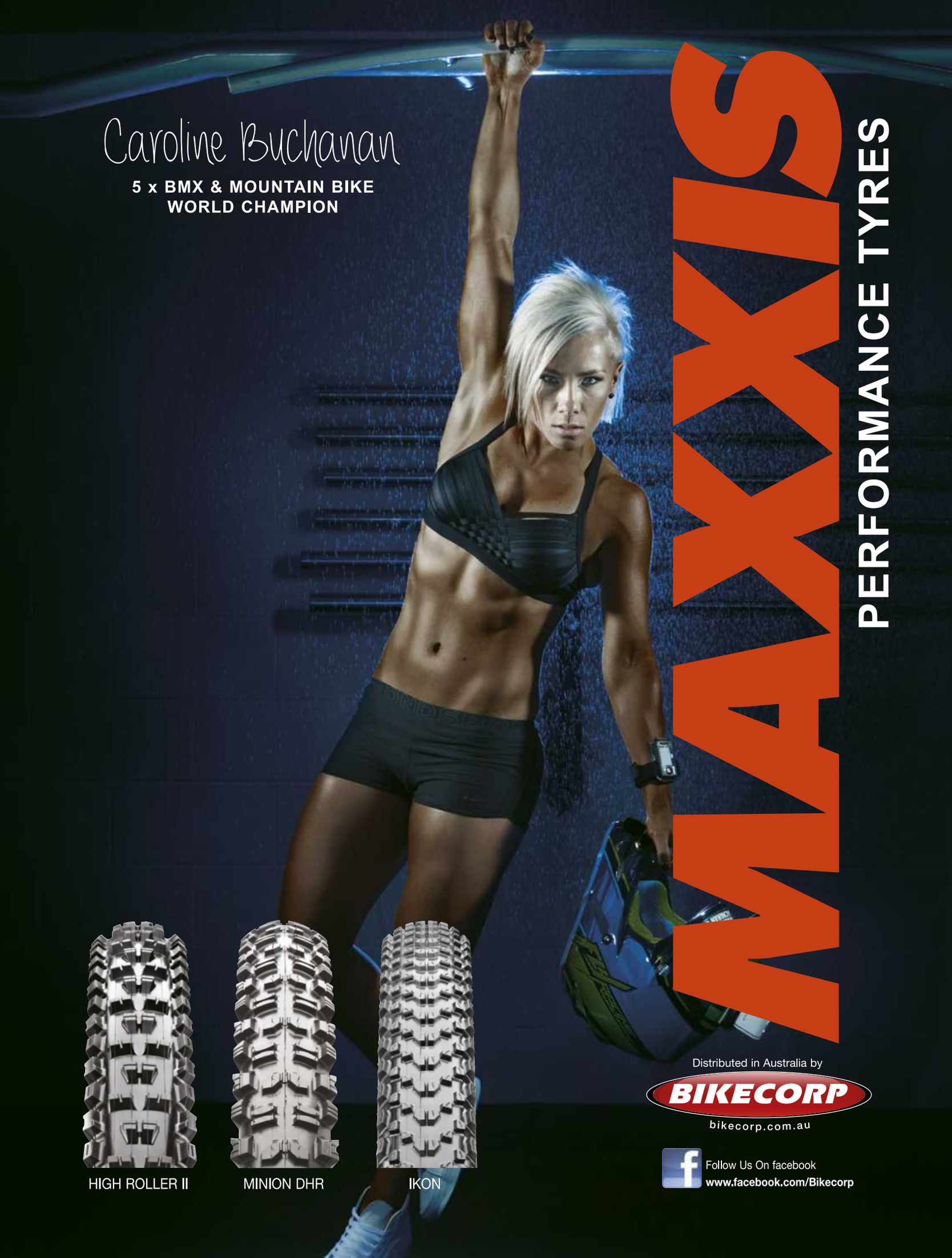
As finals approach, and World Cup Finals, we also have plenty of footy to keep you occupied. James Smith looks at the return of Wayne Bennett to the Brisbane Broncos, one of the most successful coach-club partnerships in history that is poised for a glorious reprise at this year's business end. Robert Drane assembles one of the most unlikely collections of AFL players you could manage – the "accidental" champions who just happened to be in the right place at the right time to win a premiership. And Matt Cleary profiles Wallaby star Bernard Foley, who looks set to play a central role in the Australians' tilt at next month's Rugby World Cup in Britain. If he can just get into the first XV!

Me? I got to interview Brad Hogg, the poster boy for 40-something Aussie blokes who might have once fancied they could bowl a leggie for Australia – at least in their own backyard. Don't mind saying it was one of the pleasures of my professional life to yarn with him. Hope you can see why. Top man.

Plenty more to get your teeth into.

Play on.

Graem Sims
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GAME AND SET

Professional tennis needs an overhaul. I am not going to single-out Nick Kyrgios or Bernard Tomic or anyone else, but the game does have a culture of petulant behaviour by too many players of both genders, not limited to those born in the 1990s. Infantile tantrums, abuse of officials and a complete lack of respect for the game itself are quietly accepted, or "punished" by paltry fines.

Tennis is not a team sport. Players, particularly those who are any good, focus on their own performance and their own importance from a young age. It's not surprising that some end up as belligerent narcissists with an overwhelming sense of entitlement. But this *can* be changed. Golf has the same issue of self-isolation. However, professional golfers behave well and compete fairly, because that is expected (in fact *demanded*) of them. Any golfer putting on a performance like those we see in almost every tennis event would become a pariah overnight.

So how does tennis fix itself? Suspensions. No more fines, just suspensions. Although some of them won't admit it, even the worst of the tennis ratbags really does love playing the game. Taking away the right to play *would* hurt ... A fine of an insignificant percentage of a player's prizemoney *doesn't*. Sure, there would be bellyaching from players and sponsors. But in the end, both parties would be better off, and so would we. It wouldn't take long.

– Keith Rewell, Walsh Bay, NSW

... AND MATCH

The repeated petulant antics by Nick Kyrgios shows he has sunk to a whole new level. His integrity must now be brought into question.

The lack of respect Kyrgios appears to have for officialdom is becoming a real concern. It needs to be addressed urgently. Kyrgios would be well-advised to pull his head in and curb his boorish behaviour during his matches; otherwise it's a matter of time before he will be fined heavily or possibly suspended. The paltry fine of 6000 pounds he copped at The Championships at Wimbledon was a mere slap on the wrist and would hardly seem to act as a deterrent.

It would be a real shame if his tennis career starts to go off the rails – he has the world at his feet. But until he can take a leaf out of Roger Federer's book and display good sportsmanship in both victory and defeat, Nick Kyrgios will continue to polarise opinions amongst tennis fans in Australia.

– Garry Jacobs, Arundel, Gold Coast

BIDDING HIGH

Despite the FIFA corruption scandal, Australia should *still* put in a bid to host the FIFA Club World Cup. This competition features the world's best-performing football teams and is a very popular event for fans around the world. Australia already has adequate stadiums to host it, so the cost to stage this event would be minimal by world standards. Plus, it would be a great boost for the Australian economy.

The tournament is usually held in December, which is summer here, so the weather would be ideal. The FFA might have to interrupt the A-League season for a three-week period, as it did for the Asian Cup, but this shouldn't cause too many problems. It would also mean the FFA working with Cricket Australia, so that both the Club World Cup and cricket's Big Bash League could use the stadiums without clashing. But they could do it.

If an Australian bid was successful, it could be an event that we could host for three or four years in a row. It would surely attract thousands of fans. When FIFA gets cleaned up, let's get behind the concept.

– Malcolm Webster, Boronia, Vic

MEMOIR RULES

It's almost *de rigeur* for a retiring sportsman to write or commission his memoirs. If he has some popularity and success under his belt, as for example an Australian cricket captain might, the book could enjoy some popularity before finding its way to the remainder tables, but it will probably *still* need a measure of controversy to brighten the otherwise turgid recitation of statistics and humorous anecdotes.

For lesser mortals the controversy is even *more* important: if you are a journeyman footballer with no claim to fame apart from having your career ended by a horrific and tragic on-field accident, the need for controversy is paramount – there's nothing else to talk about! However, regardless of the sympathy such an individual might properly attract, in selecting a target for this controversy the individual and his advisers are not excused from the rules of common decency.

But recent events might suggest that they think they are.

– Tom Bradley, Brisbane, Qld

HOLY GROUND

It's appropriate that you showed a church next to a cricket ground in your issue regarding the Ashes coverage (July, "Freeze Frame"). Because this Ashes will be a funeral for England. The Australian attack will destroy anything that England can toss up. Johnson, Starc, Hazlewood and Lyon will be too much for the three Lions.

It will only take two losses and Alastair will be the first Captain Cook to lose his job.

Go Australia!

– Mitchell Hall, Asquith, NSW

WRITE & WIN

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WINNER

Earlier this year, we argued that too few athletes were named Australian of the Year. In another respect, maybe the award should go to the individual who does the *most* Australian thing of the past 12 months. And by that standard, no one in 2015 will beat **Mick Fanning**: a guy named Mick, while surfing and competing, punched a shark and survived. Can't top that. Joking aside, Fanning, who has enjoyed a decorated life as a triple world champion, understood entirely that coming away unscathed from his encounter at South Africa's Jeffreys Bay was a victory of a whole other magnitude. We can only hope that Fanning's psyche came away without damage, and he continues to author what will be one of the more interesting stories in sport through the rest of the World Surf League season.





LOSER

What is more un-Australian: not competing hard, or refusing to have a drink after said competition? English quick Jimmy Anderson really touched a nerve when he said his team had offered to share a post-Test libation with the Aussies, which set off counter-claims that the offer had never been made. In any event, the idea of **in-series drinking** was shot down, something that just isn't done by serious professional cricketers anymore, and would only occur after the very last call of "stumps" is made (perhaps that's why Shane Warne was so insistent about asking if the players were "thirsty" after the World Cup final). No matter where you fall on this issue, you've got to give credit to Anderson for lobbing a fine psychological grenade at his opponents, who look kind-of bad either way.

WINNER

There's not a lot of positives to be found in the shocking death of Adelaide Crows coach Phil Walsh. But if there is a silver lining, it's been the outpouring of **comity within the AFL**. As the league has grown more hard-edged, with livelihoods and reputations constantly on the line, the sense of solidarity among the various parts of a football community can feel like it has frayed. It takes a jolt like Walsh's murder to remind everyone that the resentments that build among sporting competitors are often, in the grand scheme of things, downright petty. Walsh, who bridged the great divide of South Australian football as well as coached in Geelong and West Coast, and played in Brisbane, was constituted as the kind of figure to bring the AFL together. The respect shown by the various clubs and the league in the wake of his death has been genuinely touching; when the Crows and Port played to a typically hard-fought result in the most recent Showdown in mid-July, with the best player afield awarded the newly renamed Phil Walsh Medal, we saw football the best it can be. Now, on the other hand ...



LOSER

When comes to the cases of Adam Goodes and Lewis Jetta, when **AFL fans** boo and jeer, do they know what they're doing it for? Defenders of the derision would claim that emotion is what makes footy crowds great, and people go to the game to show it. Fair enough, but buying a ticket doesn't grant a licence to act like a jackass, or worse. On one level, the constant booing of Goodes is a basic act of mob mentality – attached to it several levels down is a strain of racism directed at a man who would express pride in who he is. Accusing Goodes and company of inciting racial animus *with a dance* is about as ridiculous as saying the All Blacks are making jingoistic threats before every game. It's a sad comment on race relations as a whole that Aboriginal sportsmen will engender such a vicious reaction for being too proud, or transgress the neat boundaries of behaviour that the public draws around sportspeople. One can only imagine how Australia would react if it produced a Muhammad Ali of its own.

PHOTOS BY *Getty Images*



LOSER

Now we know what **Sepp Blatter** has in mind post-FIFA: a future in radio! As the man himself said, "There are so many radio stations in the world I am sure that *someone* will be happy to listen to me." Hopefully no one explains podcasting to Sepp ... Anyhow, Blatter did set a date for the end of his presidency, with a new FIFA election to take place on February 26 next year. All of this was rather overshadowed by British prankster Simon Brodkin showering Blatter in fake cash at a press conference, but surreal is the way with Blatter these days. Between Vladimir Putin saying he deserves the Nobel Prize and *not* turning up to the Women's World Cup final in Canada, what a lame-duck Blatter chooses to do is anybody's guess. We suspect a great follow-up to that terrible FIFA movie is in the works ...

WINNER

Golf's majors this year have been proof of the superiority of the **old links over new links**. While modern-built, retro homages such as Chambers Bay, the site of the US Open, and PGA host Whistling Straits, raised eyebrows at various moments, the Old Course at St Andrews did what it has done for centuries: provide utterly compelling golf. But there were warning signs evident at the Open Championship. A day's play was lost because balls would not settle on the 11th green, set up to roll too quickly. Then there's the *real* sore point – with the modern golf ball flying as far as it does, there are large portions of the course that present a less-interesting test of golf. Everyone in the game would profess their love of the place, but what would golfers – professional and otherwise – be willing to do to ensure that the Old Course and other classic layouts remain entirely relevant to how modern golf is played?

WINNER

If it seems like everywhere you turn these days that football teams with "iconic" brands are on the money grab in non-familiar locales, then you have to pay extra credit to the **All Blacks playing in Samoa**. New Zealand's first XV isn't above making money, as its excursion to Chicago last year showed. But being one of the world's great sporting teams means playing small stages as well as big ones, and the scenes from Apia won't soon be forgotten. It should also serve as a rejoinder to other big rugby-playing nations – David Pocock has called for the Wallabies, who happen to play their own Chicago game this month, to make their own venture to the Pacific islands.

LOSER

When the younger Andre Agassi proclaimed that image was everything, he said more than he knew. His sport has long had a fixation on aesthetics, but the **obsession with style over substance in tennis** can truly reach manic levels. Nick Kyrgios is the latest to learn this first-hand – the amount of chatter he's generated is way out of proportion for what is fundamentally a demonstrative 20-year-old who could count himself among the 30 or 40 best tennis players in the world. But mix in Australia's yearning for a top-level presence in the game, as well as the curious need to align the nation's self-image with the "proper" conduct of its sportsmen (a sledging cricketer or two aside), and Kyrgios becomes a red-hot talking point across the land. And all this carrying-on continues while we see another former angry, young man, Lleyton Hewitt, grow into an honest-to-goodness respected elder of the game. Case in point: let's reserve the judgments based on how they look, and give them time.



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FREEZE FRAME



Backhanded compliment: Novak Djokovic repeated as Wimbledon champion, once again denying Roger Federer a record-eighth career victory at the All England. Said Djokovic afterward: "It's always a great privilege playing against Roger."



Double century, twice as nice: Steve Smith's charmed run with the bat continued at Lord's, and his 215 helped set up a dominant first-innings total for the Australians in the second Test of the Ashes series.

PHOTOS BY *Getty Images*





Expert racquetball players know how to use the reflections to their advantage ... Canada's Vincent Gagnon got the jump on Jose Rojas of the US in the team racquetball semi-final match at the Pan Am Games in Toronto.

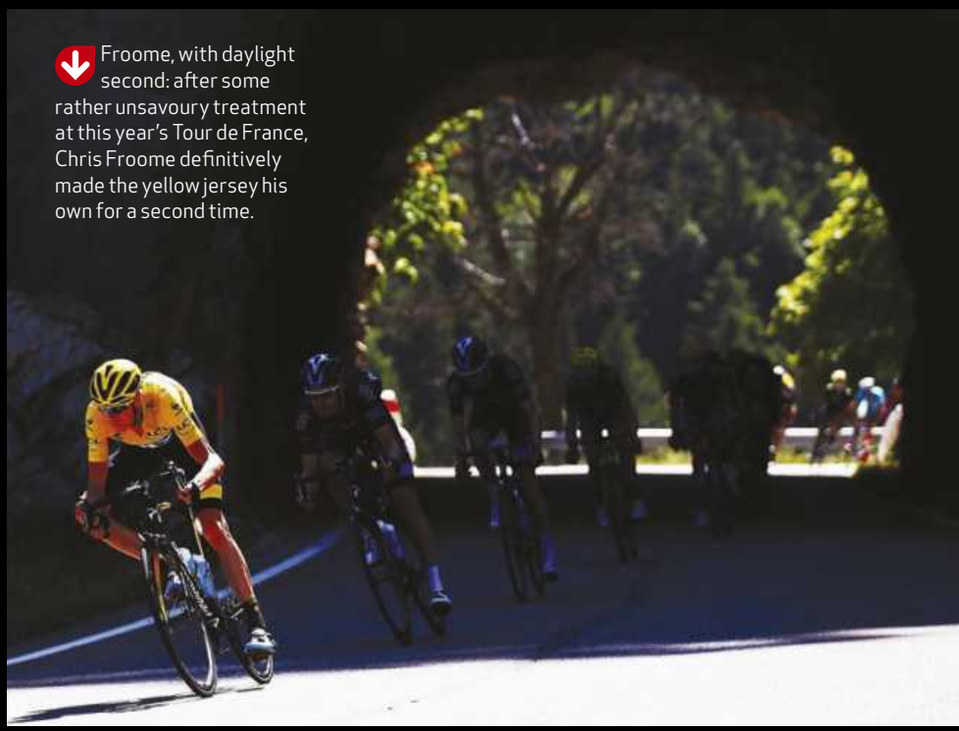


Lion lyin', swan divin': Brisbane's Jed Adcock and Sydney's Nick Smith brace for impact during their round 15 AFL match at the Gabba. The lowly Lions made it tough for the visitors, but the Swans came away as 21-point winners.

PHOTOS BY *Getty Images*



Froome, with daylight second: after some rather unsavoury treatment at this year's Tour de France, Chris Froome definitively made the yellow jersey his own for a second time.



Beam her up: Brazilian gymnast Flavia Lopes Saraiva emerged as a potential face for Rio 2016, as the 133cm tall, 15-year-old charmed Pan Am Games crowds on her way to bronze in the all-around.

If your name is Queen, you better reign. US hurdler Queen Harrison indeed ruled the 100m hurdles at the Pan Am Games, and dare we say it, might have done the same to a healthy Sally Pearson at the Worlds.





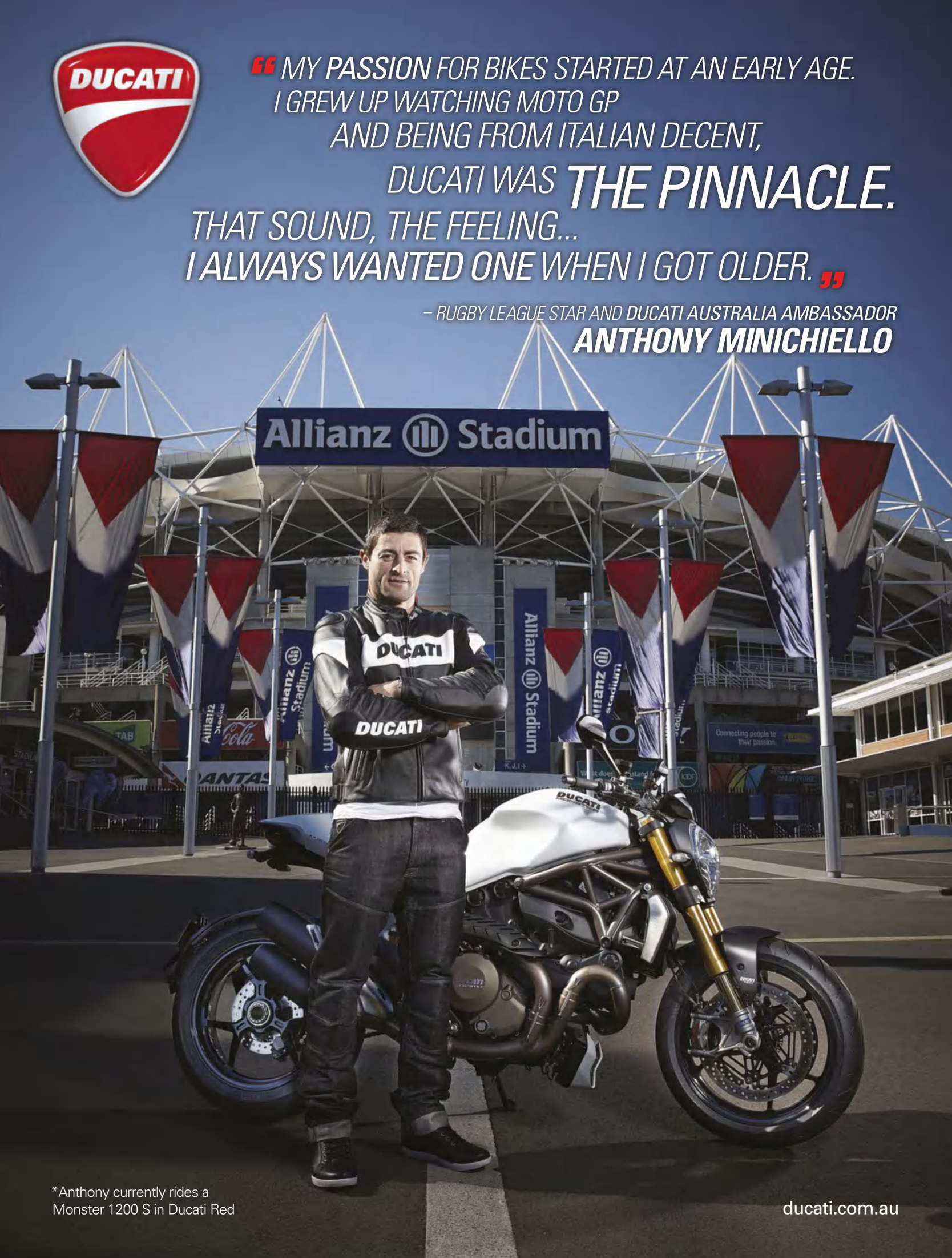
Sir Ben Ainslie, Knight of the Waves. Sounds like a *Game Of Thrones* character, but instead Britain's quadruple Olympic gold-medallist is skippering the Land Rover BAR team, which jumped to the lead in the Louis Vuitton America's World Cup Series at Portsmouth.

You can tell what the birds are thinking: who is this goose? Chile's Felipe Miranda scattered the waterfowl during the Pan Am Games' men's slalom waterski event, held on Lake Ontario. Miranda did have his *duck*s in a row, claiming gold in the overall.



WIN Think you can write a funnier caption for this pic than our humour-challenged *Inside Sport* staffer? Check out page 86 for your chance to prove your wit and win stuff.

PHOTOS BY *Getty Images*


DUCATI
"MY PASSION FOR BIKES STARTED AT AN EARLY AGE.
I GREW UP WATCHING MOTO GP
AND BEING FROM ITALIAN DECENT,
DUCATI WAS THE PINNACLE.
THAT SOUND, THE FEELING...
I ALWAYS WANTED ONE WHEN I GOT OLDER."
– RUGBY LEAGUE STAR AND DUCATI AUSTRALIA AMBASSADOR
ANTHONY MINICHIELLO
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FROM THE JAWS OF ...

"I just saw a fin, I didn't see the teeth. I was *waiting* for the teeth to come at me as I was swimming ... I'm happy to not even compete ever again. Seriously, to walk away from that, I'm just so stoked."
–Surfing champ Mick Fanning, after the Aussie survived a shark attack at the J-Bay Open.

"I'm halfway between crying and laughing, because he got so lucky. I'm lost for words, to be honest. We almost just watched our friend get eaten by a shark and I'm just blown away that there's no damage at all."
– Kelly Slater, on the shark attack.

"Holy shit ... Excuse me."
– World Surf League commentator Martin Potter, calling it live.

INTERVIEW OF THE YEAR

"I thought I looked amazing and won the first round, and I thought, 'He's going to bring some more in the second round.' Then the second round came and I was like, 'Okay, I won that round as well. Cam, keep up the good work, you truly look amazing. Some people say you're the Taylor Swift of boxing.' *I'm* not saying I'm the Taylor Swift of boxing, but I'm not *not* saying I'm the Taylor Swift of boxing. Then the third round came, and I was like, 'Oh, they could've gave him that round.' ... He threw some good body shots, but, uh, core game on 100. I do sit-ups. So it didn't really affect me that much. I felt I worked him, I felt I looked amazing. I would've given myself that fight, if I was a judge."
– American boxer Cam Awesome, after losing a semi-final fight in the Pan Am Games in Toronto.



TOUR TOUGH

"I head-butted the wooden pole thing, and luckily there was a barrier thing that stopped me falling."
– Team Sky cyclist Geraint Thomas, after riding off a cliff during stage 16 of the Tour de France.

"We're human beings, and then we're sportsmen. People need to remember that. You can't come to a bike race to spit at people or to punch people or to throw urine at them – that's not acceptable at any level."
– Tour de France winner Chris Froome (pictured), who indeed endured both at this year's great race.

"I got a full-on punch ... They are so anti-whatever we are. Do I deserve to be booed? Does Chris Froome deserve this?"
– Froome's team-mate, Richie Porte.

"I've read a whole lot. Comments like 'he shouldn't be representing Australia', 'he's a disgrace'. It's tough to read. I'm human. I don't really want them to love me. I don't want their love, but everyone deserves respect."
– The curious Nick Kyrgios.

"A game is like 55 seconds. Again, did he really do it or not? A game where a guy serves well, is that tanking, too? It is like ... sometimes it's like a boxer when he puts his hands down, is that tanking? Then he swings freely again ... If you told me he did an entire set, plus more, plus this, I'd say, 'Okay, it's a bit much, probably.'"
– Roger Federer, when asked whether Kyrgios tanked against Richard Gasquet at Wimbledon.

"A guy at that age, when he's played a long time, when you make a decision like this now, it's pretty much final ... The frustrating thing about Shane is you always believe there's more there than he's producing."
– Steve Waugh, on the (final?) axing of Shane Watson from the Australian Test team.

"He said, 'If you want to touch the shield, your best chance is to go up and touch the Wally Lewis statue out the front of the stadium ... I'll take the picture; that will be the closest you get to the shield in your lifetime.'"
– Maroons' assistant coach Kevin Walters, on what Johnathan Thurston said to Mitchell Pearce at the end of Origin III.

"'She is built like a man'. Yeah, my husband looks just like this in a dress. You're an idiot."
– Author JK Rowling, on Twitter, putting the smackdown on a Serena Williams troll.

"As I walked back I was thinking, 'What were you doing, you idiot?' It was stupid what I did. You wouldn't expect that from anyone, let alone an international cricketer. Rule one is ground your bat."
– England all-rounder Ben Stokes, on getting run out in England's second-inning collapse at Lord's.

"I wonder how Floyd feels being beat by a woman for once."
– Ronda Rousey, after winning a fighter of the year award over boxer Mayweather.

PHOTOS BY *Getty Images*

Verbatim

"I have been a tremendous supporter of women's golf. When others wanted nothing to do with it, and many thought that the LPGA Tour was a thing of the past and had absolutely no future, I stuck with the tour and with the ladies."
– Donald Trump, in a letter to the LPGA, who baulked at their association with Trump's courses after the US presidential candidate branded Mexicans as "rapists".

"You wouldn't even get one new decent stadium for that – unless it's a small soccer venue or something."
– Jeff Kennett, lambasting the New South Wales' Government's $600m plan for a new stadium.

"I've cut back on a lot of things ... I've started eating healthy. That's the hardest thing for me right now is the sacrifices, eating vegetables all the time."
– Superstar sprinter Usain Bolt, no longer on the chicken nuggets.

"We have to accept a little bit that the AFL has no longer got its monopoly on Melbourne winter sport ... the spectacle is more critical than it's ever been because there is genuine opposition out there."
– AFL legend Leigh Matthews, reading the runes after the visits of the global soccer powerhouses.

"It doesn't fit in with the culture we are building – you can't choose a music festival over a camp."
– Opals basketball star Rachel Jarry, on Liz Cambage missing day one of the national team's camp to attend Splendour in the Grass.

"As far as the rookies, and I know they probably got mad, but I said, 'Why don't you all act like the white guys? You never see them in the paper getting high or hitting people. Why don't you act like that?' ... I just did it for the shock value of it. The hardest thing is these guys, they have an attention span of a five-year-old."
– Former NFL star Charles Haley, delivering an orientation speech to Jarryd Hayne and the rest of the 49ers rookies in camp.

"Do I think he got mugged and bashed and absolutely robbed? No, I don't. That's the story I told because that's the story he told me to tell because I wasn't there ... I kept thinking, 'No it's not, because you probably just fell over shitfaced drunk. You didn't have enough to eat, you had a few wines, you fell over."
– Mick Middlemo, former caddie to Robert Allenby, shedding light on the golfer's mysterious night out in Hawaii earlier this year.

STUMPS?

"In the New Zealand series, we had a beer after each game with them ... We were all happy to do it. I don't know why they didn't come in. That's their prerogative."
– English fast bowler Jimmy Anderson, who set off a firestorm of indignation by claiming the Australian cricketers did that most un-Aussie thing – turn down a post-match drink.

"This was the clown that was invited into our change room and then all of a sudden everything that he saw in that change room appeared in his book ... The tradition, just for clarity, is usually at the end of the series."
– Retired Australian opener Matthew Hayden, firing back at Anderson.



THIS MONTH IN F-WORDS

"You see someone with two, four, six, eight, nine people around them and you want to debate about a fucking penalty? Is he still debating? Is he fucking serious? Wouldn't you just shut up?"
– Former NRL player Alex McKinnon, with the assessment of Cam Smith that stirred debate.

"Invite me to youre next team discussion then ask me how much I give a fuck about your team selection? Zero fucks given ... "
– Quade Cooper, via Twitter, on other people's opinions.



PHOTOS BY *Getty Images*


DAVID
BECKHAM
BEYOND
THE NEW FRAGRANCE
IT ALL STARTS WITH A DREAM
DAVID
BECKHAM
BEYOND

HONOUR ROLL



Maddison Elliott set a new world record in Glasgow.

AUSTRALIA'S LATEST WORLDBEATERS

▶ Australians won nine gold medals at last month's 2015 IPC World Swimming Championships in Glasgow. And four of them belong to **Maddison Elliott**, the 16-year-old sensation from Queensland. The youngest Australian at the London 2012 Paralympics to make the podium, with bronze medals in the 100 and 400m freestyle in the S8 category, she was at it again in Scotland, this time winning the 100m free in a new world record of 1:04.71. She also won the 50m free. Paralympian gold-medallist **Ellie Cole** won the S9 100m backstroke along with the 100m freestyle. **Brenden Hall** won gold in the men's S9 100m backstroke. The Dolphins swam 47 personal best times, set three new world records and won a total of 30 medals, including eight silver and 13 bronze.

▶ Australian **Feliks Zemdegs** has taken the Rubik's Cube world title for the second-straight time at the 2015 World Championship finals in Sao Paulo, Brazil. The 19-year-old completed the traditional 3x3x3 Rubik's Cube in an average time of 7.56 seconds and best time of 5.695 seconds, narrowly missing the world record of 5.25 seconds held by American Collin Burns.

"The competition was really, really awesome, well run, the venue was really nice, all the people were really nice," Zemdegs said. "The *win* was also really nice as well. Because I won last time, I was less nervous this time because I had already won one, so that helped a bit."

▶ **Matt Bevilacqua** has won the Men's Prone Paddleboard world title at last month's Molokai To Oahu Paddleboard World Championships in Hawaii. The 23-year-old Taswegian became the 15th Australian athlete overall and 14th consecutive to claim the title. Queenslander **Jordan Mercer** won her fifth consecutive World Championship in the women's event. The race takes more than five hours as competitors battle through the Ka'iwi Channel which separates the islands of Molokai and Oahu. It has the reputation as being one of the world's most treacherous bodies of water.

▶ Drone racer **Chad Nowak**, from Brisbane, has become the sport's first official world champion, taking a clean sweep of all three titles at the sport's first-ever competition, held in the US. He won the freestyle, team and individual champion races. Nowak controlled his drone using an on-board camera with the video streamed back to a pair of goggles.

NEXT?

When they turned up for the fifth and final Ashes Test at The Oval in 2013, Australia had already lost the urn 3-0 – but with plenty of pride to play for. Both teams piled on the runs in their first innings, but after rain interrupted the fourth day, Clarke declared the Aussies' second innings closed at 6 for 111 at the tea break on the fifth, leaving England chasing 227 in 44 overs – a sporting declaration to make a game of it and give the spectators something to remember. Kevin Pietersen responded with England's fastest-ever Ashes 50. The equation narrowed to England needing 21 runs from four overs with six wickets in hand, with a capacity crowd in a state of high excitement. What happened next? (Answer page 86)



The Quiz

1. What was the nationality of the runner up to Serena Williams at the 2015 Wimbledon Championships?
2. Brazil has won the FIFA World Cup five times over how many different decades?
3. What watch company has been the official timekeeper of the Olympic Games since 1932?
4. Which Australian won the first stage of the 2015 Tour de France?
5. Which sport was originally known as "Murderball"?
6. At the 2015 British Open, 15 Australians were entered. How many made the cut?
7. In what year did Brent Harvey make his AFL debut?
8. Which Australian surfer was Mick Fanning's opponent when he was attacked by a shark at Jeffrey's Bay in July?
9. At which Olympics did Bruce (now Caitlyn) Jenner win a gold medal in the decathlon?
10. What years did the Northern Eagles play in the NRL?

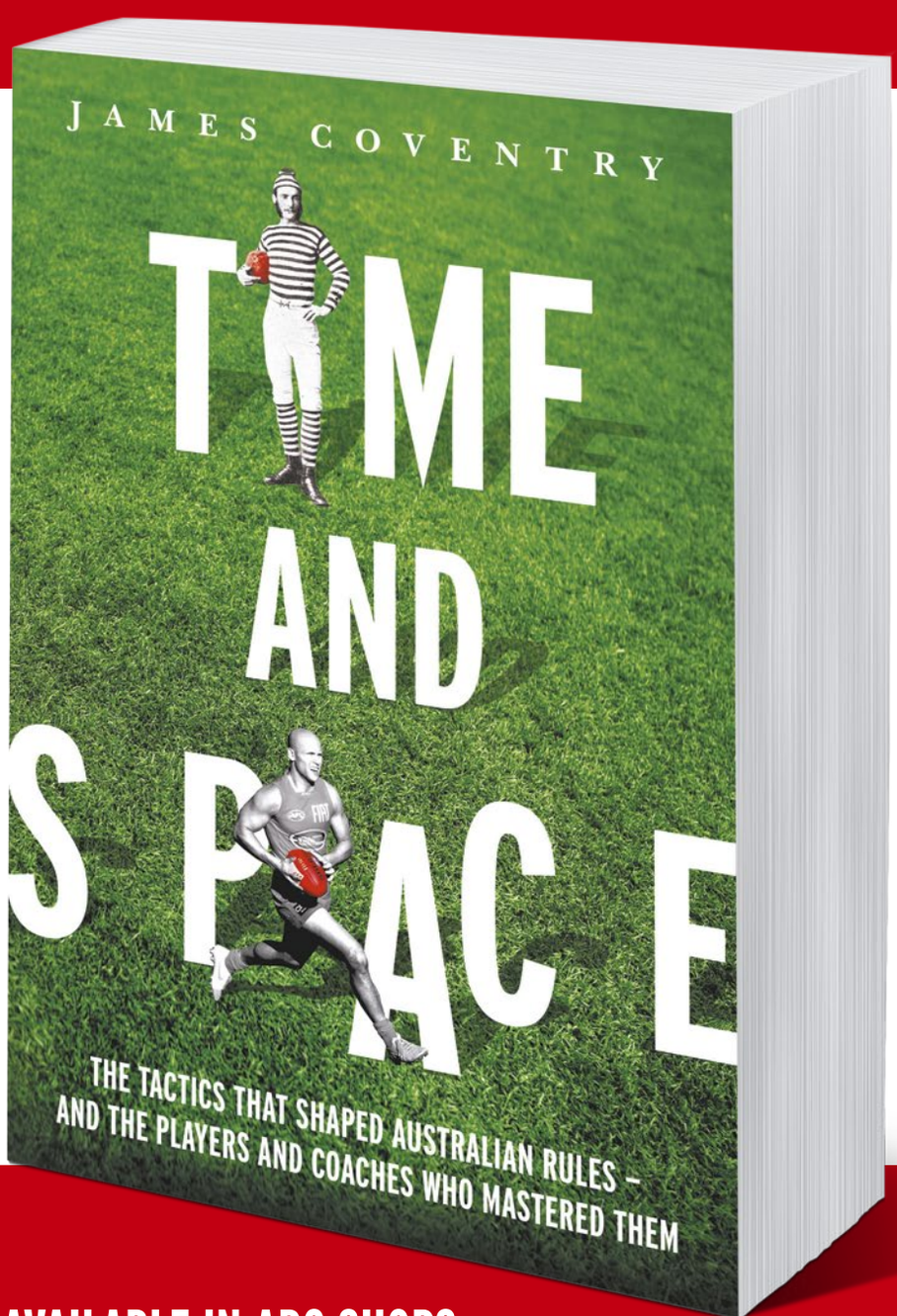
Quiz supplied by Trivia Madness.
Email: wayne@triviamadness.com.au.
For answers see page 86.

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THE LOW-DOWN ON THE BIG GAME

'The indigenous game wasn't conceived and presented fully formed but rather the subject of unrelenting evolution and revolution. What began as sneaking, storming and dodging saw the game ultimately invaded, stretched and pressed. As the journey passed through paddocks, floods and clusters, tactics once regarded as lacking in honour became the very measure by which genius was bestowed. Herein lies not just the tales of the men who pushed and prodded the Australian game. It's the story of footy itself.'

– Gerard Whateley



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WHAT TO WATCH THIS MONTH

BY JEFF CENTENERA



NRL

The finals are visible on the horizon, which wasn't something said too much in preseason in regards to the Broncos and Dragons. But lo, **Brisbane vs St George-Illawarra (Aug 14)** is now one of those games with *ramifications*, and also offers up the always-fun match of Wayne Bennett's team against his almost-team. The Friday after brings the GF rematch of **South Sydney vs Canterbury (Aug 21)** at ANZ, which also marks the pair's first meeting since the Good Friday bottle-throwing incident. Good luck to whoever's reffing *that* one. The **Roosters vs South Sydney (Sep 4)** fixture at Allianz once again occupies the prime-time spot in the final round, and we can't help but note that the winner of this contest the last two years has eventually gone on to win the premiership. And that all begins with the **Qualifying and Elimination Finals (Sep 11-13)**. ***Nine and Fox Sports***



CRICKET

The Ashes series will end once again with the fifth **Australia vs England Test (Aug 20-24)** at The Oval. We can only hope that it's the guys in baggy greens dancing to fireworks this time around, rather than Michael Clarke (pictured) complaining to the umpires about taking away the bat and ball. Anyhow, there's a one-day series to follow, and as we are, ahem, the world champions of the form, we have to take pride in these contests, lest the English win them and start talking up how they beat the best, and what that technically makes them. There's an **Australia vs England T20 (Sep 1)** in Wales first, before the opening **Australia vs England ODI (Sep 3)** at Southampton's Rose Bowl. The series moves on to Lord's **(Sep 5)**, Old Trafford **(Sep 8)**, Headingley **(Sep 11)** then back to Manchester **(Sep 13)** to wrap up the tour. ***Nine/Gem***

NETBALL

We're down to the last four at the **Netball World Cup (to Aug 16)**, and if it's anyone other than Australia, New Zealand, England and Jamaica in the **semi-finals (Aug 15)**, it'll be news. Really: the last time wasn't the pointy-end quarte netball worlds was in 1995, be Irene Van Dyk became a New Zealander and was leading the South Africans to break the four-sided monopoly. The heavily favoured Diamonds are thinking of winning 'em all rather than in terms of optimal path, but it would be interesting if the old rival Silver Ferns were to pop up a game early in the bracket rather than in the **World Cup final (Aug 16)**. We can only hope for a tight contest to rival the nail-chewer in the ANZ Championship decider, but unfortunately, all the Swifts and Firebirds will be lined up on one side. ***Fox Sports and Ten***





ATHLETICS

Track and field's peak between-Olympics event, the **IAAF World Championships (Aug 22-30)**, heads to Beijing, because, hey, that Bird's Nest is too good to do nothing with, yeah? This ground will be forever remembered as Usain Bolt's stage, but he has encountered a difficult 2015 so far. Bolt had to cancel his July program because of injury, and should he make it to the line in China, he's well off the pace this year of Justin Gatlin. Nobody is enthused about a potential Gatlin sprint double, seeing how he's a two-time drugs cheat. Then there's the doping allegations against Alberto Salazar, which have roped in a cross-section of distance-running stars, Mo Farah among them. Anyhow, on the Aussie side, there's no Sally Pearson, which leaves Kim Mickle (pictured), world no.2 in the javelin, as the best medal hope. ***SBS2 and Eurosport***

SOCCER

The EPL, rather helpfully, serves up its heavyweight title bout in week two, with **Manchester City vs Chelsea (Aug 17)** for all to see. While everyone expects the blue-hued top two to be right up there again, there's also a distinct feeling that both these sides could use a jolt – something a big win could provide. Elsewhere this month, Liverpool has a pair of tough trips that could provide a measure of its top-four mettle, if indeed it has any: **Arsenal vs Liverpool (Aug 25)** at Emirates and **Manchester United vs Liverpool (Sep 13)** at Old Trafford. We also have the start of the **UEFA Champions League (from Sep 15)** for '15-16 – will Messi and Barca (pictured)finally crack the back-to-back barrier that no club has overcome in the modern era at the European level? ***EPL on Fox Sports, Champs League on SBS and ESPN***





NFL

The National Football League pumps the air into the pigskin for 2015, and the only person *not* fired up for the opening kickoff is Tom Brady. The now four-time Super Bowl winner will be serving his Deflategate suspension as his Patriots play the season's very first game, **Pittsburgh at New England (Sep 11)**. There's some meaty material served up in week one of 17, including the divisional rivalry of **NY Giants at Dallas (Sep 14)**, while *GT* will have an eye on one of its favourites, the Eagles' mad-scientist coach, Chip Kelly, and what his numerous offseason manoeuvres have wrought in **Philadelphia at Atlanta (Sep 15)**. And then there's the one that Australia will be waiting for, **Minnesota at San Francisco (Sep 15)**, if ex-rugby league star Jarryd Hayne (pictured) can indeed cut it in 49er training camp. ***Seven and ESPN***

SURFING

Up until Mick Fanning encountered the shark, the moment for sheer look-at-that quality on the WSL was commonly the **Tahiti Billabong Pro (to Aug 25)**. Teahupoo's waves (below, with Kelly Slater) were video-game stuff last year, producing more perfect-ten rides than the entire season up to that point. Adding to the visceral thrill is Tahiti's place on the schedule – as the seventh top on tour, it has become a pivotal event, and should again be critical in this year's title race, with surprises like Adriano de Souza, Filipe Toledo and Owen Wright popping up in the season's first half, and Fanning now engaged in an incredible title campaign. From the South Pacific, the WSL heads to California's Pac coast for the **Hurley Pro at Trestles (from Sep 9)**, where the guys will link up again with the women's tour. ***Fox Sports***





DARTS

Tell you one thing the darts crowd gets right: walk-on music. Even the pro wrestlers have nothing on the "180!" crowd, who have defined their entire personas around their entrance songs. (Humble suggestion: golfers should look into it as they go to the first tee.) For the top players, a change in music is big news – late last year, English star James Wade dumped his standard, Dizzee Rascal's *Bonkers*. His choice of song had been telling, as it was widely known that Wade suffers from mental health issues. He hasn't been able to settle on a song since, and we'll see what Wade walks out to as he makes his way to our two legs of the PDC schedule, the **Perth Darts Masters (Aug 14-16)** and the **Sydney Darts Masters (Aug 20-22)**, having made the semi-finals in both events last year, which were won by Phil Taylor. ***Fox Sports***

BASKETBALL

The nation's basketball teams have to qualify for next year's Olympics, technically, but the Melbourne leg of the **FIBA Oceania Championship (Aug 15)** is really an opportunity to get some of Australia's world-class hoops talents a rare chance in front of a home crowd, against New Zealand. On the men's side, particularly, the Boomers will finally get to assemble some of their NBA names, including Andrew Bogut, who hasn't played in Australia since 2006. Matthew Dellavedova and Dante Exum will also play, but Patty Mills (pictured), Aron Baynes and Joe Ingles will sit out. The Opals will also feature in the double-header, but will be dealing with some absences – not only veteran stars Lauren Jackson and Penny Taylor, but also Liz Cambage, on the outs over missing day one of camp to attend a music festival. ***Nine***



AFL

Round 20 throws up a couple of potential September previews, starting with **Sydney vs Collingwood (Aug 14)**. Rather remarkably, this will be the Pies' first game at the SCG in 15 years, when coach Nathan Buckley was booming kicks around the Sydney oval's confines. Later that weekend, the 42nd edition of the Western Derby could prove one of the more meaningful, as **Fremantle vs West Coast (Aug 16)** shapes as a meeting of top-four heavies. The Eagles will be seeking respite – they've lost the last six to Nat Fyfe and company. But for all the key contests and last-eight calculations leading up to **Qualifying and Elimination Finals (Sep 11-13)**, perhaps the most notable – and surely the most poignant – game this month will be **Adelaide vs Geelong (Sep 4-6)** at Simonds. Their first contest for 2015 went unplayed after the tragic death of Phil Walsh; whatever the result on this day, this will be a match that will matter. ***Seven and Fox Footy***



PHOTOS BY *Getty Images*

RUGBY

Honest question: if the Wallabies were to win back the Bledisloe Cup after 13 years but crash out in the World Cup, would that still make it a successful year? Anyhow, maybe the best we can hope for from the return leg of **Australia vs New Zealand (Aug 15)** is that the All Blacks don't send the Wallabies away by hanging 50 points on them in Eden Park again. On their way to England for the World Cup, the Wallabies stop off in Chicago for **Australia vs US (Sep 6)** in a reprise of the New Zealanders' visit there last year. Side note: props to the All Blacks for playing in Samoa (below), the kind of outreach that the world's leading sporting teams should do. And while the drumbeat picks up to rugby's biggest showcase, the second year of the local third-tier comp begins with the opening round of the **National Rugby Championship (Aug 20)**.





GOLF

The last time the **PGA Championship (Aug 14-17)** was at Whistling Straits, we witnessed Dustin Johnson (above) come up with a really novel way to lose – he grounded his club in scrubland that was actually bunker, missed out on the play-off, and later claimed he hadn't read rules that were posted above the men's urinals. Johnson has dudded himself out of a few more Majors since, including his more conventional 72nd hole three-putt at the US Open last June, and firmly established his reputation as his era's super-talented, high-living, star-crossed golfer (you're off the hook, Sergio). DJ should be among the contenders at 2015's last Major, if only because the course in Wisconsin should set up neatly for the bombers. The ladies also play their last big one for the season, the **Evian Championship (Sep 10-13)** in France.

MOTORSPORT

Into the revhead spotlight this month comes the rally cars, as the **WRC Rally Australia (Sep 10-13)** brings the off-road elite to Coffs Harbour. Two things that fascinate *GT* about series leader Sebastien Ogier (below): one, that the WRC managed to find another Sebastien to succeed Sebastien Loeb as the class' leading driver; two, Ogier apparently played boules professionally, which makes for one of the oddest sporting crossovers in the world. Plenty of other motorsport action speeding along, including the Formula One's stops at the **Belgian GP (Aug 23)** and the **Italian GP (Sep 6)**, whose future at Monza is, rather unbelievably, clouded. Supercars have a couple of big rounds coming, with the **Sydney Super Sprint (Aug 21-23)** at Eastern Creek, and the enduro portion of the season starting with the **Sandown 500 (Sep 11-13)**.





SPOTLIGHT

The 2015 Rugby World Cup is on the horizon, and Fox Sports is providing world-class coverage of rugby's peak event. As it was for the Cricket World Cup earlier this year, there will be a 24-hour channel dedicated to the eighth contest for the Webb Ellis Cup, which is being held in England and Wales. The channel will broadcast all 48 matches of the World Cup live in high definition, with Fox Sports' *Rugby HQ* crew on the ground in Britain to cover every step of the tournament. In addition to the live action, there will be a meaty offering of rugby-related programming, including the *Rugby Weekly* show as well as *Rugby Legends*, an interview show with Wallaby greats that promises to be illuminating.

TENNIS

One talking point to rule them all at the **US Open (Sep 1-14)**: Serena Williams takes aim at the first singles' Grand Slam, men's or women's, in more than a quarter-century. Take a moment to appreciate the depth of the achievement – no-one had won the first three legs of the Slam since Steffi Graf's grand year in 1988, and there's been a mere five times since that someone has won the first *two*. So career Slam no.22 for Williams would be most gratifying, and not only because it would equal Graf's open-era record. It can be argued that of our contemporary sporting greats, Williams might be the most underappreciated. The reasons for that are various and multifaceted, but the level of acclaim she receives really isn't commensurate with her level of accomplishment. A Serena Slam would go quite a way to resolving that.



PHOTOS BY *Getty Images*

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On The Punt

Like Claudio Ranieri, newly appointed at Leicester, we miss the English Premier League. Even if the offseason seems to last five minutes. We're back into nine months of late Saturdays and early Sundays, getting worked up about what Jose Mourinho said and whether any of the top teams will field actual players from England. The 2015-16 campaign shapes as a heavyweight bout – mid-table insurgents need not apply – as the league's established powers all appear primed for a crack at the title.



CHAMPIONS

CHELSEA	$2.40
MANCHESTER CITY	$3.40
ARSENAL	$5
MANCHESTER UNITED	$5.50
LIVERPOOL	$23

TOP FOUR

LIVERPOOL	$3.40
TOTTENHAM	$5.50
SOUTHAMPTON	$11
EVERTON	$13
SWANSEA	$46

RELEGATION

WATFORD	$1.53
NORWICH	$1.91
BOURNEMOUTH	$2
SUNDERLAND	$3.10
LEICESTER	$3.75

(Prices courtesy of SportsBet. Pre-market odds at time of publication. Prices subject to change.)

SAFE BET

Chelsea made it academic last season, sucking the drama out of the race in a very, well, Mourinho way. In claiming its first league crown in five years, Chelsea again conceded the fewest goals in the comp, just as it has in each of its five seasons under the club's voluble Portuguese boss. Chelsea also *scored* the second-most, although its 73 last season was the lowest by a champion since 2009. It was pragmatic, with some accusing Chelsea of being rather dull, but as Jose rejoined, *not winning* for a long time is boring, too. Not boring is the prospect of winning again, which this side is set up to do. Diego Costa and Cesc Fabregas proved ideal return on investment, and Eden Hazard (pictured) shook off any notion that he wasn't a Mourinho guy with a player-of-the-year season. With so few holes to patch in the offseason, the club went in for striker Radamel Falcao in an interesting reclamation project. Stalwart goalie Petr Cech left, for Arsenal, in a move seemingly calculated to inflame those Mourinho-Wenger showdowns.



VALUE BET

Arsenal, off a third-place finish and back-to-back FA Cups, is a nice bet, but not as intriguing as Manchester United. There were missteps in season one under Louis van Gaal: the loss to MK Dons, the di Maria and Falcao signings, the second-lowest points total for Manchester United in the EPL era. But in the big picture, the Red Devils were back in the top four. Van Gaal is close to fielding an entire first team brought in on his watch. The big get was Bastian Schweinsteiger (above), the Bayern and Germany mainstay who could finally resolve the midfield gap that has plagued United in recent times, along with Southampton's Morgan Schneiderlin, Dutch winger Memphis Depay and Italian defender Matteo Darmian.



BRUSH

Not even forking out $103m for Raheem Sterling got pulses racing at Man City, as many thought Liverpool got the better end of the deal. City's identity seems stuck – is it still the whale whose Abu Dhabi cash can remake the landscape? Or is it the Financial Fair Play-limited outfit fancifully chasing at Barca's whole-of-football philosophy, which showed a tendency last season to lapse against weaker teams? Manuel Pellegrini can still wheel out Sergio Aguero (above) and should Yaya Toure and David Silva rebound from off years, this outfit will score bushels full of goals. But with their similarly resourced rivals back to peak form, you have to question what might happen at Etihad Stadium should consecutive trophy-less seasons occur.



HEDGE

History says one of Bournemouth, Watford and Norwich won't stick – in 22 EPL seasons, only twice have all three promoted sides stayed up. Then there's Sunderland, which has been dicing with the danger zone for the last three years. Stewart Downing brushed them to play in the Championship, and upon signing Tottenham's Younes Kaboul this offseason, an old quote from Kaboul's agent was dredged up: "Younes wouldn't join Sunderland even if there was an earthquake." The Black Cats have had enough of shake-ups, particularly managerially, and Dutch veteran Dick Advocaat (above) might be the one to settle things down. If he does, note that Sunderland also happens to be paying $5.50 for the top ten.

PHOTOS BY *Getty Images*

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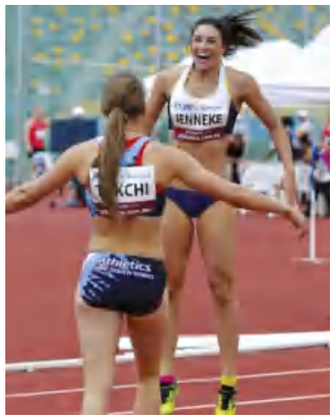
WITH SALLY PEARSON SIDELINED, THIS FAST-IMPROVING 21-YEAR-OLD LEADS AUSTRALIA'S HURDLING CHARGE AT THIS MONTH'S BIG DANCE IN CHINA.

MICHELLE WHO?

Haven't heard of her? You probably just *reckon* you haven't ... Think "pre-race jiggle dance". Michelle Jenneke is the Sydney gal who sent the internet into meltdown with her warm-up prior to her heat at the 2012 World Juniors. She *is* rather easy on the eye. And it was definitely rather cute. And it has since rated only about 27 million views on Youtube ...

When quizzed about her dancey warm-up, and that radiant smile permanently plastered across her face, it's clear this is a young woman simply loving her sport, loving life, and definitely not minding the attention. It started as a bit of fun to relax herself before a race, and has since won her worldwide fame, with subsequent appearances on talkshows and in several steamy videos – even the 2013 *Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Edition*. She even raced a certain Jeremy Clarkson (driving a car) for the Top Gear touring show last year – *that's* how famous she is! But it's the joy of running that comes shining through in her interviews.

Yes, Michelle Jenneke also runs ... and she is quick. And getting quicker. Just last month she won her first senior international medal with a bronze at the World University Games in South Korea – importantly, qualifying herself for next year's Rio Olympics by going under 13 seconds with a 12.94, even with a cramping calf in the final stages that caused her to cautiously back off after leading for the first three-quarters of the race. That follows on from her fifth at the Edinburgh Commonwealth Games final last year. She's shaved half a second off her PB in the last 12 months – and could go even faster at this month's World Championships in Beijing. With World and Olympic champion Sally Pearson benched after her shocking fall earlier this year, it will be Jenneke flying the flag for the women on the hurdles track.







WHAT'S HER STORY?

Jenneke grew up in the Hills District in Sydney's north-west, joining Cherrybrook Athletics Club as a nine-year-old and coming under the patient tutelage of coach Mick Zisti, brother of former rugby league footballer Nick. Zisti keeps things fun and low-key in his camp, and it all seems to be working.

At school she played pretty much anything going: soccer, futsal, handball, basketball and touch. But the track was always there, and her breakthrough win came in 2010 when she won the 100m hurdles at the Australian Junior Championships; she followed that up with a silver at the 2010 Singapore Youth Olympic Games.

Since then, it's been a gradual rise through the ranks for Jenneke, with that fifth in Edinburgh a definite sign that she was at home in the senior ranks.

On that score, it obviously doesn't hurt to have the world and Olympic champion alongside her in recent major meets. "I really enjoy racing against Sally because she pushes me into faster times," she says. "And I think she enjoyed racing against me this domestic season because she hasn't had anyone that close to her in Australia for a while. I think it gave her some motivation to have to put her foot down on Australian soil and pull up some good times."

Jenneke is clearly not just a pretty face: she currently studies mechatronic engineering and computer science at Sydney University. Now, stepping out of Pearson's dominant shadow on the track, if not the internet, Jenneke has an opportunity to show she has the potential to go to the next rung at this month's World Championships. And maybe collect a few gazillion more Youtube hits ...

– Graem Sims

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"I'D BE THE FIVE-YEAR-OLD SITTING THERE AT SMOKO WAITING FOR THE SHEARERS TO BOWL TO ME."

BRAD HOGG

He looks like he's 44 going on 24. But don't let Brad Hogg's impish grin and larrikin ways fool you: he's actually 44 going on 45! And still definitely at the top of his game in T20, and *still* a wanted man in the various leagues around the world. The West Australian got a new lease on cricketing life with the introduction of the Big Bash in Australia in 2011, coming out of retirement to put in stellar performances for the Perth Scorchers that have seen them take the last two titles and seen *him* reselected for Australia in 2012 and 2014. That's a long time since his Test debut back in 1996! He was in Shane Warne's shadow for much of his career (phase one), but has proved himself one of the world's best ODI spinners all on his own, rolling over his left-arm leggies, and a very handy batsman coming in down the order. He's also one of the most popular players in the country. And a country boy at heart. He spoke to *Inside Sport* editor **Graem Sims**.

So what have you been doing with yourself this winter since the Indian Premier League finished?

I've just been preparing for the new season to come around. And I've been doing a bit of public speaking. My wife Cheryl and I run our own entertainment business here in Perth.

I've been reading some rave reviews about your presentations. Does the speaking come naturally?

No. Far from it. It took a while. When I retired in 2008 I had an agent who arranged corporate engagements for me, and after about the fourth one I said no more – I just can't do it. And then she rang me up three days later and asked if I could just do *one* more; she really needed a favour to help a friend out. And I said I don't want to do it, but I did it. And that was how I met Cheryl ...

Cheryl now being your manager and business partner and, er, wife ... You must have done *something* right! She was in the audience?

Yeah, Cheryl was the client at that event! That was quite interesting. We didn't date straight after that – it was about three months before we saw each other again accidentally. But yeah, I didn't prepare anything. I just took my baggy green and coat and just went up there on the fly and it was one of the best I've ever done. But it's not as easy as people think. There's a bit of a skill to it. I've since done some training and now really enjoy performing in that arena.

Any pangs when you're tuned into this Ashes series? Do you reckon you could still be giving those Poms a run for their money?

Oh look, I had a limited Test career. Looking back, I'm very happy with what I did. The only disappointment was retiring in 2008, because I basically had the Test spot then.

What was the story there, mate? You retired before you wanted to?

Yeah, well, I had some family issues. I tried to save a marriage. When you're down the gurgler that far ... Cricket was a bit of a smokescreen with the relationship in a sense. Because you're travelling all the time and everything feels hunky-dory ... But yeah, having to give up something that you really love for someone else, it doesn't really work because you're always going to have in

PHOTOS BY *Getty Images*

STELLA ARTOIS

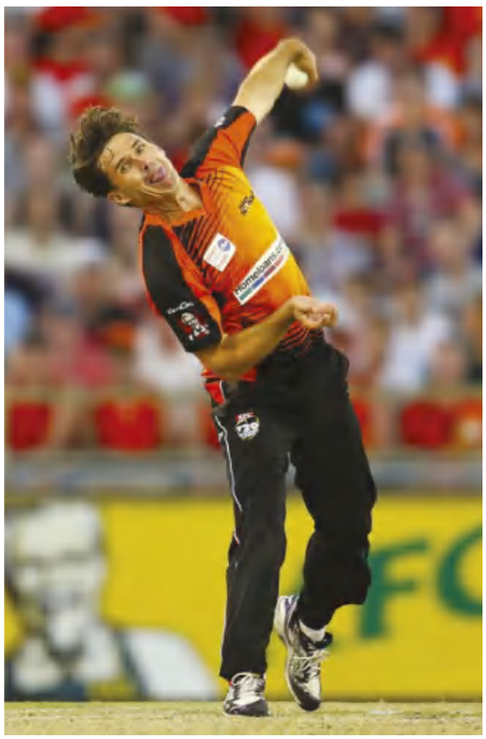
Driven to perfection



A new lease of life with the Perth Scorchers for Hoggy. Thanks to partner Cheryl [LEFT].







the back of your mind what could have been. And you get frustrated. Especially when you're doing something that's as special as representing your country. So it's just one of those things that I couldn't cope with.

Then what happened? Because you came back.

I had nearly three years off. Then my country team from where I grew up rang and asked could I play Country Week with them – "We're a little bit short", because numbers in the country are dying. So I went down there and that was my first game back. There was a bit of a discussion about where I should bat, and I just said bat me down the list because everyone's busted their backsides to get the opportunity to play up in Perth. So I went out there, and their keeper sledged me after a couple of overs.

And it all came flooding back ...

Yeah, I said, "There's no point giving it to me because if things get out of hand here, I've got seven cousins who'll have you in the car park." (Laughs) But it was quite good. And that was the start of turning it around. I went back to grade cricket two weeks after that. Cheryl was the one forcing me to go back to cricket. She said, "If you love it, just go back and play." We got to the finals that year and Mickey Arthur rang me up and said, "Are you interested in playing for the Perth Scorchers at the end of the year?" And that's when they were revamping the T20 and bringing out the Big Bash. And I said, "Yeah, I'm interested. What about me coming back to play Shield cricket and one-day cricket?" And he said, "Ah, let's not take it too far ... "

Don Bradman had the water tank. Steve Waugh had a twin. How did *you* learn to play cricket growing up on a sheep station?

I was pretty lucky – I had a mum who was a schoolteacher. I was the only child until I was 13. Shearers would come out and I'd be the five-year-old just sitting there at smoko waiting for them to bowl to me while they were having their break. Dad built me a cricket net on the farm – then they bought me a ball machine. Mum would feed it every night as long as I'd done my homework. When I first went up for grade cricket I was pretty strong on the offside through point and cover; for the first year with the net we just had a rabbit-proof fence that only covered the off side. So wherever the ball pitched, I just tried to hit it into the net because I got sick of chasing the balls down the paddock on the leg side. It's amazing how guys develop their game by just those little things that happen in the backyard. Then I had my Uncle Peter, who's probably 12 years older than me; we used to play on Nanna's back verandah; we were both left-handed batsmen and he'd always be trying to take my head off, and I probably broke the window six times before Nanna said that the next time we break it we're not playing cricket out there anymore. So that again had me avoiding the pull shot, so the leg side deteriorated even more ...

I presume this was late '70s early '80s? Who were your heroes?

To be honest, my dad was my hero. And everyone around the Williams Cricket Association (south-east of Perth) ... Everyone says that the old man was a better cricketer than me, but he didn't have that opportunity to go to the city – he always wanted to be on the farm. But I remember watching the West Indies play Australia, and the West Indies back then used to annihilate everyone. I always put myself in an Australian team to be the captain and the saviour. I looked up to the Kim Hughes and Greg Chappells and Dennis Lillees, but probably my biggest hero out of Australian cricket was Geoff Marsh, for the simple fact that he came from our cricket association and when I was 15 I was fortunate enough to spend a week with him on his farm and that really showed me what it took to play for Australia – he had a cricket net as well with a ball machine.

Well, you've since turned into the poster boy for the over-40s. Have you had to turn into a fitness freak to keep going? What's your secret?

Well, my secret *is* staying fit. When I went to England as an 18-year-old – in my first year out of school I got an offer to play club cricket over there – I came back realising that I needed a chef because I didn't have Mum with me. I had a pair of tennis shorts ▸

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that wouldn't fit over my knees – that's how big I blew out in six months.

That can be a trap, eh? Pub life and stodgy food ...

Yeah, and it didn't help having two fish and chip shops on either side of your house. I came back that year and looked at myself in the mirror and I thought I'm not going to let that happen to me again. It took me a fair while to get back to fighting fitness, but I became a fitness freak because I just love my food. It's actually pretty hard to keep a diet. At the end of the day it's not really what you eat, it's *how much* you eat. That's what I've worked out.

So are you a runner or a weights man?

I used to be a runner. After I went to Geoff Marsh's, I realised how much running you needed to do. But a lot of players wouldn't have done as much as I did. I took it up and I loved it.

I make it you've played 123 ODIs for Australia – and apparently none of us can remember the results of any of them! But I'll bet YOU can. What's your most memorable match for Australia? Feel free to pick a World Cup game.

Definitely 2003, against Pakistan. That's when Warney had to leave the tour and Andrew Symonds made that hundred; during the lead-up to the match everyone was getting stuck into Andrew Symonds – he shouldn't be there, he's a waste of space and all this other type of jargon. And after he made a match-winning hundred, I just remember everyone sitting in the change-rooms celebrating and turning to the media and getting stuck into them a bit, because the media had slagged him ...

He was a popular guy in the team, wasn't he?

Yeah, he was. And it gave me a great idea of what Australian cricket was all about, and what that team was all about. That gave me the confidence to be the number one spinner in the team, taking the reins from Warne. That sort of encouraged me to go out and feel confident when I was out in the middle.

That's interesting you cite someone else's good performance



THIS PIC Hogg in 1996, on debut for Australia.

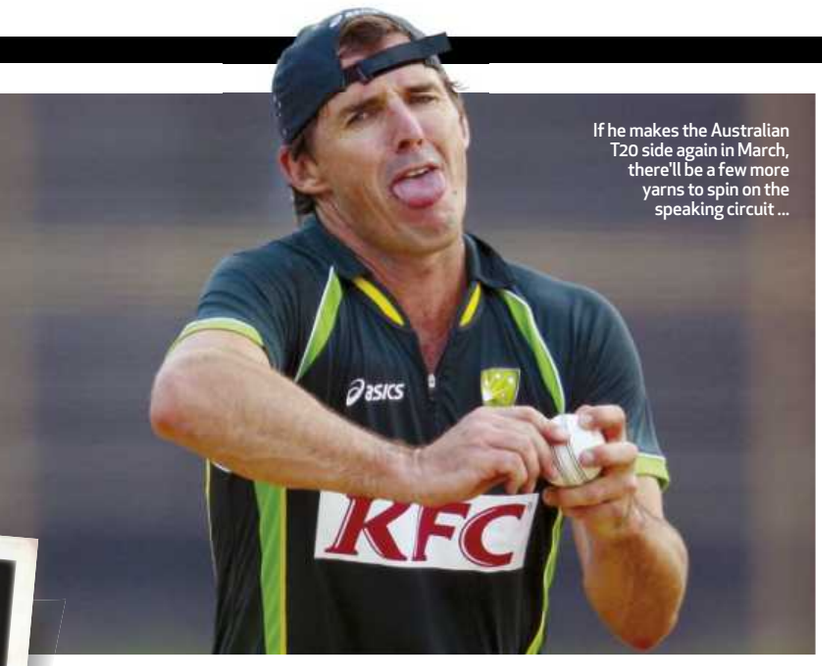




"I KNEW I WASN'T GOING TO MAKE IT AS A BATSMAN TO PLAY FOR AUSTRALIA. SO I STARTED BOWLING SPIN EVERY SPARE MOMENT I HAD."

STELLA ARTOIS

Driven to perfection



If he makes the Australian T20 side again in March, there'll be a few more yarns to spin on the speaking circuit ...

PHOTOS BY *Getty Images*

in your most memorable game. What did you do with the ball after that?

Well, the memorable ball for me out of that World Cup campaign was against Andy Flower in Zimbabwe. Before each game there were three blokes assigned to do the match preparation about the opposition, so for this game it was Ian Harvey, myself and Darren Lehmann. And I was only a new kid on the block back then so I was still fairly quiet. Anyway, we're talking about Andy Flower and we were carrying on for about 40 minutes – or I should say Ian Harvey and Darren Lehmann were carrying on, because Andy Flower is a pretty decent batsman, one of the best in the world. And I just said, "Boys, don't worry about this – just bring me on and I'll get him out with a flipper." And Boof's turned around to me and said, "Hoggy, that's enough from you." And then we were out there and I bowled my first over against the two Flower boys – Grant was batting as well, and they were sweeping the ears off me; I think they played about five sweeps in the first over. And the next over I'm at the top of my mark wondering what I should bowl. I wanted to bowl the flipper but in the back of my mind I could hear John Buchanan saying, "Always bowl your stock ball first ball – don't try and be clever with your first ball." And I just thought, "Stuff it, I never really listened to Dad on the farm, I just went and did my own thing. So why don't I do it now?" And I bowled a flipper and it hit the top of off stump. And I just remember yelling out, "Well boys, will you listen to me *now*?"

How long did it take for you to get a presentable flipper into your repertoire?

It took a *long* time. I didn't even start bowling leg spin until my second year of first-class cricket, after I got asked to bowl them in the nets to prepare us for a bloke named "Fred" Freedman. I played my first Shield game as a batsman but over that winter I realised that I wasn't going to make it as a batsman to play for Australia. So I just worked my guts out – I tried to bowl as long as I possibly could. Every spare minute I had, you'd see me down the nets doing it. Even at work, if I had a spare five minutes, I'd just go to the nets with six balls and bowl them. So it took me a fair while. The first flipper I bowled in a match was against Mike Hussey playing for Fremantle against Wanneroo; I had a bloke at point who's six foot eight, and I let the flipper go, and he's caught it on the full, jumping. It could have gone for four wides over point's head.

I remember Warney used to sometimes stick his tongue out and pull faces at a batsman on approach to put them off. What's the origin of your tongue hijinks? Was that a bowling tactic?

No, no. I look at my youngest daughter, my seven-year-old, and she's just got her tongue out exactly like mine. It's always been like that. Mum always knew whether I was doing my homework properly because my tongue was out when I was concentrating.

Sorry, have to ask: have you ever chomped on it while you're playing?

The funny thing is that while playing football my tongue would be out all the time, and I got hit a number of times but never bit it. But it gets in the way of my food – so every now and then I'll bite it while eating. I've also actually bitten it while talking!

You're known as a bit of a prankster. Can you give us an example of your best work?

The first Shield final I ever played was against Queensland at the WACA in 1996. We're in the change rooms, and I remember big Jo Angel – he used to cut the big toe out of his shoes, so when the fast bowler lands the toe doesn't hit the leather. I used to be the first one into the change rooms most times and when I rocked in on the second day there was this dead rat under my locker. So I've picked it up, shoved it in Joe's shoe, and poked the head through the hole. So anyway Big Jo has grabbed his shoes and I'm trying to check out his shoes and I don't see the head, and no one's made any comment. So I'm sitting there thinking he must have pulled it out. Anyway, three days later, on the fifth day, there was this massive stink in the change room, and we couldn't find where it was coming from. But we found out. Joey used to wear those orthotic inserts in his shoes, and there was a fossil embedded in his orthotic. He'd been playing the whole game bowling with this dead rat in his shoe and he's flattened it. I could *not believe* he could not feel it. But the bastard, on the final day, we used to have these little carrier bags, and he put a fish in mine from lunch. I didn't find that till next season ...

If you make the team for the T20 World Cup next March, apparently that'll make you the third-oldest player ever selected for Australia.

How good would that be?

Yeah, I don't know whether I'll be able to get a gig – aw, I dunno ...

You're being modest. Your numbers are still stacking up from what I'm reading ...

It'd be great – it'd be *fantastic*. I guess that's one thing I've probably learnt throughout my career: there's been times where I'm sort of playing and I'll forget why I'm there. I'll start worrying about contracts and all that jargon. And I've learnt that if you're worrying about the other stuff, your performances go right down the gurgler.

But you're going around again, aren't you? Have you got a BBL contract for next summer?

Not at present, no. But I'll definitely be playing. It's one of those things – how do you put it? I've got my goals of playing for Australia ... don't get me wrong there. But if you're not concentrating or enjoying where you're at in the present moment, you're never going to go to the next level. I think the best thing about the Perth Scorchers is that I've been playing for WA cricket – I haven't been playing to go up the ladder in a sense. And it makes a huge difference when you know your purpose – *why* you're actually playing.

You could call that the theme of your comeback years, couldn't you? Playing for the joy of it ... It's written all over your face when you're on the paddock. And the fans really respond to it.

Yeah, I always had those values, when I was playing for Australia, too. I remember when I got back to play for Australia in the T20s, they were having a meeting, and the theme was that we're paid to win, in a sense. And I sort of don't agree with that. For me, we're paid to *entertain*. I didn't play cricket because Australia were winning, but I loved watching how they'd stack up against the West Indies and see their courage, because the West Indies were a tough team back then. Australians will always be supported as long as they are seen to be giving 100 percent. It's not because they're winning. It's more about the effort they put out in the middle.

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Hot Shot

How close was South Africa's Willie le Roux to making a break? Maybe about a foot – his, when it was grabbed by NZ's Charles Piutau. The small differences all added up in the match in Joburg, where the All Blacks snuck away with Richie McCaw's try from a designed lineout play, and a win over the Springboks.

PHOTO BY *Ashley Vlotman / Getty Images*

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BACK IN THE SADDLE

COACH WAYNE BENNETT THIS SEASON HAS SEEN THE POWERHOUSE CLUB BACK ON TOP OF THE NRL TABLE. HOW LONG BEFORE THEY RETURN TO THE WINNERS' PODIUM ON GRAND FINAL NIGHT?

By **JAMES SMITH**

TO THE Brisbane Broncos, State of Origin rugby league is a bit like a boozy session at the local on a Sunday afternoon. When it's on, *how good's this – wouldn't want to be anywhere else!* But when the alarm sounds on Monday morning, it's back to reality, with a boulder of a hangover to carry around for good measure. It's been like this for the Broncos ever since they entered the comp back in the late eighties. In 2006, for example, the post-Origin fade hit them seriously hard. They'd lost either side of Game II, had regrouped as a club after the series, then dropped five matches in a row. How was veteran Brisbane coach Wayne Bennett going to get his men out of *this*? Wasn't he their "super coach", with the best winning record in the game and all that?

Bennett's chosen course of action was to literally *get them out of it*. He took the unusual step of gifting his team a week off from training and all other club duties. It wasn't even a bye week – they'd just *had* one of those following the first loss of their streak a few rounds back. As veteran captain Darren Lockyer would explain a few years later, in conversation with *Rugby League Week* magazine, he chose to take it relatively easy, staying close to home. "It was almost like a mid-season holiday; Some guys even went to *Thailand* ... " Bennett didn't care what his players did, ▸

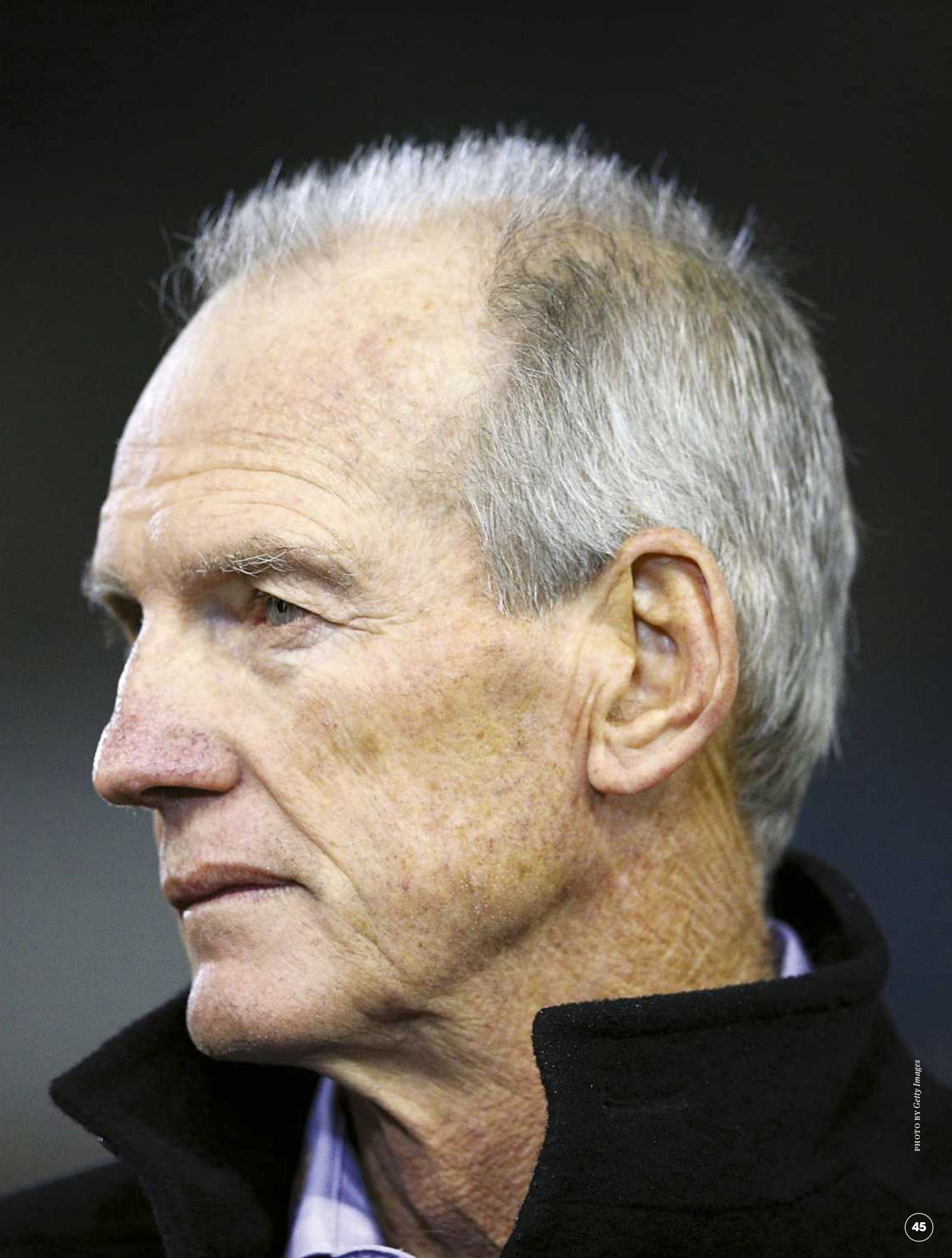


PHOTO BY *Getty Images*



or where they went, just as long as they weren't doing footy. Locky recalls the media meltdown that followed: "The media were saying things like: 'These guys aren't taking it seriously. Why would you give them a week off?'"

So did Bennett's tactic actually *work*, this non-footy plan back to footy success? The record shows that apart from a loss at home in the first week of the finals to St George-Illawarra, they didn't drop another game. For the rest of the season.

"In the short term, it probably had a negati impact in terms of little things; a couple of guys might've put a few kilos on in weight," Lockyer recalled. "But in the long term, mentally, it was a great refresher." The benefits of the controversial break showed when it mattered. On the eve c semi-finals, the Broncos hit top gear, destroying the Bulldogs 30-0 and the Eels 23-0. They rounded-out the season by putting 36 past the Warriors in a 24-point thrashing. Offers co-host of popular Fox Sports discussion show *NRL 360,* Ben Ikin: "He's not a tactical genius, but over 30-40 years of coaching, Wayne Bennett has figured out for himself that the way *he* likes to coach is what wins *him* footy games."

Not that anyone could guess at the time, but minor premiers the Melbourne Storm, featuring veterans Matt Geyer and Scotty Hill, a much younger-than-now Cameron Smith and an *embryonic* Greg Inglis, didn't really stand a chance in the title decider. The 2006 grand final was historic in that it was the first big dance in elite-level Australian rugby league not to feature at least *one* Sydney team. The locals soon got over that though, with 79,609 packing Homebush to watch one of the Broncos' favourite sons, rampaging prop Shane Webcke, play his 254th and final NRL game. Ahead for most of the he Broncos won an ging arm wrestle -8, sealing victory with a late Lockyer one-pointer.

BENNETT'S MEN WERE A SETTLED BUT VIPEROUS UNIT BACK IN 2006.

Defensively that night though, the Broncos were outstanding, executing their game plan to perfection. Bennett even *smiled* after that lt, a trait the tall, igure isn't exactly famous for. Pesky young scribes firing unchallenging questions at him post-match has never helped. And he's always had a bit on his plate besides football. He grew up quickly. *Had* to. After his father deserted the family when he was ten years old, Wayne stepped up, helping his mother out, helping her get through ... life. A generation later, he's been a brave, tough and loving parent for his two disabled children throughout *their* lives.

Back to footy, Bennett's men were a settled but viperous unit back in 2006, with Lockyer, Webcke and Thorn into their 12th seasons, and Petero, Casey McGuire and hardman Tonie Carroll reaching their ninth. They were a bit lighter on for experience in the backs, but Brent Tate, Karmichael Hunt and Justin Hodges knew by then where the try line was. It all must've been a sensational blur for a kid like Darius Boyd, too. The 19-year-old winger only debuted in first grade that year and was living the thrill of what was *surely* the first of many grand finals to come for the Broncos. Except it wasn't ...

CHANGE OF RIDERS

Wayne Bennett's announcement that 2008 would be his last season at Brisbane was like God announcing his resignation from the Catholic Church. There was simply no such thing as a Wayne Bennett-less Broncos; after 21 seasons, he was *still* their foundation coach. To the fans sitting in the stands each week at Suncorp Stadium, he was like a father figure, even to Brisbane disciples who had fathers of their own. He was just ... the man in charge, and probably would be forever, like Sir Alex Ferguson at Manchester United or Kevin Sheedy at the Bombers.

Bennett's departure from Brisbane was a good two years in the making, according to Queensland newspaper *The Courier Mail*, which reported in February '08 that Broncos management had been miffed with Bennett since "it was revealed he had secretly brokered a deal to coach the Roosters" in 2006. Bennett was negotiating with a rival club, according to *The Courier Mail*, because he believed there were people at the Broncos weighing up a future

PHOTOS BY *Getty Images*



THIS IMAGE AND LEFT Glory to Bennett and Lockyer's Broncos in 2006. BELOW A premiership at the Dragons in 2010; another mission accomplished.





How much would now-Knights mentor Danny Buderus have learnt during Bennett's tenure in the Hunter?

without him. Bennett's fear of not leaving enough financial support for the care required for his two disabled children in years to come has always burned brightly. Nonetheless, the relationship between Bennett and the club's board was reportedly never the same again.

Christmas arrived early for the St George-Illawarra Dragons (and *not* the Roosters) in March 2008, when the joint venture announced they'd secured Bennett for three seasons. His arrival dramatically changed the way the red and whites went about things. He brought his own coaching support staff with him, part of a club-wide clean-out of players and key personnel. Because of Bennett, the Dragons enjoyed increased bargaining power at the player negotiation table, with names such as Darius Boyd, Jeremy Smith, Neville Costigan, veteran Luke Priddis and Mick Weyman bolstering the team for 2009 onwards.

Former coach Nathan Brown's Dragons had finished 13th and seventh in the two seasons before Bennett's arrival. Just two years down the track, their captain Ben Hornby was lifting rugby league's ultimate prize, the Telstra Premiership. It happened *that* quickly. Many *expected* it to.

Back at the ranch, all eyes were on Brisbane's former assistant coach, Ivan Henjak, who had been chosen for the job no one thought would ever be declared vacant. It turned out to be an outrageously successful 2009 for the maroon and golds. Sure, there was the routine post-Origin crash, but by season's end, Henjak's squad found itself in sixth spot heading into the finals. After play-off victories over the Titans, and even Wayne's Dragons, Henjak's men were eliminated by the Storm a week before the grand final. Not a bad year for a bloke replacing God.

The following season proved a parallel universe – a living hell – for the Broncos, where the reality of a Bennett-less Brisbane finally set in. Beginning with Justin Hodges' season-ending Achilles' injury, things deteriorated. Mid-year, Henjak's megastar back, Israel Folau, announced he was transferring to Sydney to have a go at playing Aussie rules, and Darren Lockyer missed the end of the season through injury. On the positive side, the arrival of Storm behemoth Greg Inglis was not far away ... until he backflipped at season's end.

The Broncos missed the finals that year for the first time since 1991. They finished tenth, their lowest end-of-season ladder position. Ever. In February 2011, a few months after Bennett's Dragons lifted their trophy, Henjak lost his job to his assistant Anthony Griffin. ▸

GOOD KNIGHT

''Private ownership appeals to me. I like it. This guy wants to take Newcastle to another level,'' Wayne Bennett said of businessman Nathan Tinkler in April 2011 at the announcement of Bennett's four-year deal with the Newcastle Knights. A month earlier, Tinkler and his Hunter Sports Group were unanimously approved to take over the embattled club's finances and operations. Hiring Bennett was among Tinkler's first moves, the super coach's three-year deal with the Dragons expiring at season's end. Making life slightly easier for the Knights during the appointment was the classy way in which their former mentor Rick Stone handled having his job description lowered from head coach to assistant, despite having guided the club through recent finals campaigns.

Bennett's move to Newcastle went some way to silencing critics who had long sniggered that the secret to his success as a mentor was that he had never coached a battling club; that he'd always coached elite players. Sure, the Danny Buderus (now stand-in coach) and Kurt Gidley-led Knights back then were no minnows, but compared to his multi-premiership glamour boys at the Broncos, they needed a good polish. At a quick glance, Bennett's record during his three-year Knights tenure *is* poor in comparison with his previous roles – 12th in both his first and third seasons. Those two weary campaigns book-ended a spirited crack in 2013, though. Finishing the regular season in seventh, his Knights made it all the way to the Preliminary Final before being knocked out by eventual premiers the Roosters the week before the decider. The Knights battled bravely without their club legend Buderus that



night, who was stretchered from the field after being knocked out. It would be the last game of Buderus' illustrious career, but the Knights would fight on ... for *one* more season with Bennett in charge, at least.

During Bennett's service for the Knights, the likeable and dry-witted Anthony Griffin, like Henjak before him, took Brisbane to within one match of the grand final in his first season in charge, proving his ability to fill the chair once occupied by rugby league royalty. But relative poor finishes (by Broncos' standards) followed across 2012-14. In his second season at the helm, his team scored just 12 wins. They collected his third and lost as many as they won in 2014. In the Hunter earlier that year, Tinkler withdrew from the Knights. He failed to renew a $10m bank guarantee, ending his ownership. Bennett still had a year to run on his original contract when it all hit the fan there, but had renegotiated his deal with the club when the NRL took over the reins. Discussions with the Broncos were underway. It was time to put the Brisbane band back together. The top job at Newcastle went back to Stone.

THERE WAS SIMPLY NO SUCH THING AS A WAYNE BENNETT-LESS BRONCOS.

BACK ON TOP

''The feedback I've got from people who work there is, prior to Wayne coming home, they always still believed there was a really good attitude amongst the group,'' former Bear, Bronco and Charger (and Bennett's son-in-law) Ben Ikin shares of the Broncos during the 700-gamer's absence.

''Whether it be at training or in games, the effort was always much where they ted it to be. They rhaps just lacked a little bit of the know-how, which is Wayne's speciality. In a couple of conversations we've had, he's said to me, 'It's not dissimilar here at Brisbane to when I arrived at the agons.' Credit to the le who were at the s before him, too.

There were a lot of things being done well. But he's just got that ability because he's won so much and he's been around so long. He's experienced and knowledgeable enough to know what that extra five or ten percent looks like.''

There's a nice synergy between the controversial career of Darius Boyd and the lifespan of the Brisbane Broncos. He ▸



Corey Parker [FRONT] and Sam Thaiday were there for the club's last title in 2006. Their decade-long wait for another premiership may soon be over ...

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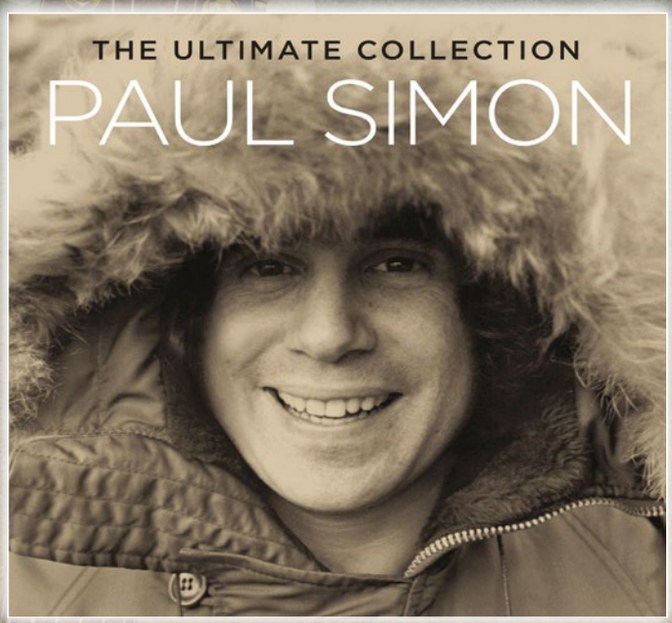
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SONY MUSIC



Darius Boyd is a veteran at the Broncos this time around. BELOW Anthony Milford is playing the role of "Kevvie Walters" to perfection.

was born the year before *they* were, was there for their last title, and will no doubt play a leading role in the charge towards another grand final appearance in the coming months. Boyd landed back at the Broncos after signing a three-year deal said to be worth arour million – money freed thanks to the departur of Josh Hoffman to the Titans and Ben Barba to Cronulla. Despite only playing a handful of games since his return thanks to a freak Achilles' injury at training in December, the fullback has provided an extra element of on-field professionalis the Broncos' young att His recent recovery from depression was documented by the ABC's *Australian Story* earlier this year, the program revealing his battles with mental illness. Boyd would lock himself away for up to three days after a loss; probably needless to say during that time he lost his passion for the game and for being around it. That he *self-admitted* to a mental health clinic says more about the man than antics like one-word answers at press conferences or media brushes ever will.

The 28-year-old has played a tick over 200 career first grade games for the Broncos, Dragons and Newcastle, has represented Australia 17 times and played 23 State of Origins for Queensland. A consistent performer throughout his career, it can be argued that 2010 was his best season to date. He was judged the Dally M Fullback of the year, Rugby League international Federation Fullback of the Year, and picked up the Clive Churchill Medal for man of the match in St George-Illawarra's grand final win over the Roosters. He has followed Bennett throughout his career, never having played an NRL game under any other coach. He's copped plenty of flak from rival fans for that, but what he's also happily copped is a e of sparkling miership rings ... The Brisbane Broncos are enjoying their best season since 2006. This year they *sailed* through that often-daunting Origin period like never before, even smashing the Wests ers on the other side r good measure. Sitting pretty on top of the table for the first time since 2011, by round 20 they'd dropped just three games and clocked up 15 wins. It has been argued by many that the Broncos boast their best scrum base combo since Allan Langer and Kevin Walters in young star halves Ben Hunt and Anthony Milford.

THE BRONCOS ARE ABOUT DUE FOR MORE GLORY, SURELY. MAYBE OVERDUE.



That's debatable (it's still early days for both of them), but it's certainly the case that the team has never looked as composed or organised since the departure of 350-game veteran Darren Lockyer four seasons ago.

Ask those two kids the secret to their team's success and they'd – knowing footy players – probably throw the credit baton in the direction of the team's engine room, and they'd be right to do so. The Broncos have an extremely mobile and robust pack of forwards, every player capable of playing extended minutes. Until recently their big men were led by the ever-reliable Josh McGuire, who has been lost for the season through injury. His absence means the importance of enforcer Adam Blair intensifies. Blair seems to be rather enjoying the Brisbane air after his career coughed and spluttered during his time at Wests Tigers. The cheeky and skilful Alex Glenn seems to get better with experience, while out the back, young utility Corey Oates is setting the world on fire. The dynamic Jordan Kahu has "star of the future" written all over him as well.

The Broncos are about due for more glory, *surely*. Maybe *overdue*. They haven't played in a grand final for *eight* seasons now, which in Brisbane years is an eternity. Whether their return to form is just because Bennett is back, who knows, but the fact is, he *is* back, and so are they, looking down on the field from the top of the table. It's exactly how men like Barry Maranta, one of the club's co-founders, had wanted it all along. "All your personnel have got to be good, and of course, getting Wayne Bennett was critical at the start for us," Maranta – whose grandson Lachlan plays in the backs – recalled for *Inside Sport*. "Even back then, all the good judges and all our own assessments told us that Wayne was the person who was going to give us long-term success." ■

PHOTOS BY *Getty Images*


STRALIAN
TBALL LEAGUE
2013
EMIERSHIP CUP
WON BY
Tasmania



PHOTO BY *Getty Images*

NOT EVERY PREMIERSHIP PLAYER CAN CLAIM THAT THEIR TITLE WAS A REWARD FOR PATIENCE AND CLUB LOYALTY. SOME WERE JUST IN THE ...

Right PLACE, Right TIME

By **ROBERT DRANE**

A **RESTAURANT** in Melbourne serves up discards and offcuts – stems of broccoli or cauliflower, for example, rather than the flower which is the common gustatory fancy. Their reasoning: stems are rigid and tough because they draw from the soil, and therefore the most nutrient-rich part of the plant. Kale is coarse, chewy and durable, like a weed, which also suggests health-giving properties. They were serving it long before it became trendy "paleo" food.

Footy clubs can be like conventional restaurants, choosing ingredients according to the dictates of current taste. But certain clubs, some of which feature in this year's finals series, see the nutrition value of players, and make a habit of recruiting with one thing in mind: health. And it doesn't get much healthier, or tasty for that matter, than a Premiership.

HAWK EYES

Hawthorn's recipe for success has, since 1961, been the most effective in AFL/VFL history. They recruit judiciously, growing their own hearty champions. When they see an opportunity, they'll pluck a hardy, if ageing, herb from elsewhere and he'll turn out to be just the ingredient for the most flavoursome feast of all: a Grand Final victory – the sort of repast the player himself might never have conceived.

The Hawks have always been good at giving chances – in some cases, second, even third, chances. In others, an unlikely first. **Sam Mitchell** is today's most documented example. Mitchell, dismissed as simply not good enough by the several AFL clubs he'd approached, is a three-time Premiership winner, and counting. He was also the 2008 Premiership captain, living proof of Woody Allen's observation that "80 percent of success is turning up."

Ian Bremner became a vital component of Hawthorn's 1971 and 1976 Premierships, despite being thrown off by Collingwood after just one game. After six fruitless seasons with St Kilda, **Russell Greene** made the luckiest decision of his life on the eve of another Hawthorn renaissance. Everything remarkable about his career happened after he crossed to the Hawks: All-Australians, MVP awards, B&Fs and, of course, the 1983, 1986 ▸

and 1988 Premierships. Good move!

With recruiting insight matched only by Paul Roos, current Hawthorn coach Alastair Clarkson has given and taken many a chance, for excellent returns.

Brent Guerra voluntarily left Port Adelaide in 2003, was delisted by St Kilda in 2005 and selected by Hawthorn at Clarkson's request. He retired with two medallions in the cabinet. **Jonathan Simpkin** had been delisted by Sydney and Geelong. With four games to his career, he was scooped up by Hawthorn, and now his 36 career games include the 2013 title. **Josh Gibson** concluded a faltering career with North before joining the Hawks in 2010. He now has the 2013-14 trophies in his cupboard. **David Hale** was disposed of by North when they decided they didn't need a goal-kicking ruckman. Two titles later, he's glad he went to Hawthorn, thanks again to Clarkson.

Jack Gunston left Adelaide, homesick for Melbourne only 14 games; he stripped of Adelaide's best first-year pla award when th heard he was leaving. Hawth n were only too d to get him. He's played in both winning Grand Finals since, and was one of the best on each occasion.

Shaun Burgoyne never thought he'd add another bauble to his collection a Adelaide's 200 Clarkson wanted him, chronically injured though e was, in 2010, and he's since added tw

Hawthorn ha aken great risks, but only after rigo s calculation. As a result, they've consis tly fielded some of the best teams the ime has seen. The radiant success of their recipe has been founded on a solid basi f sound decision-making. Their system has been so foolproof that a stand-in coach lan Joyce, could walk into the job and tak hem, or ride with them, all the way.

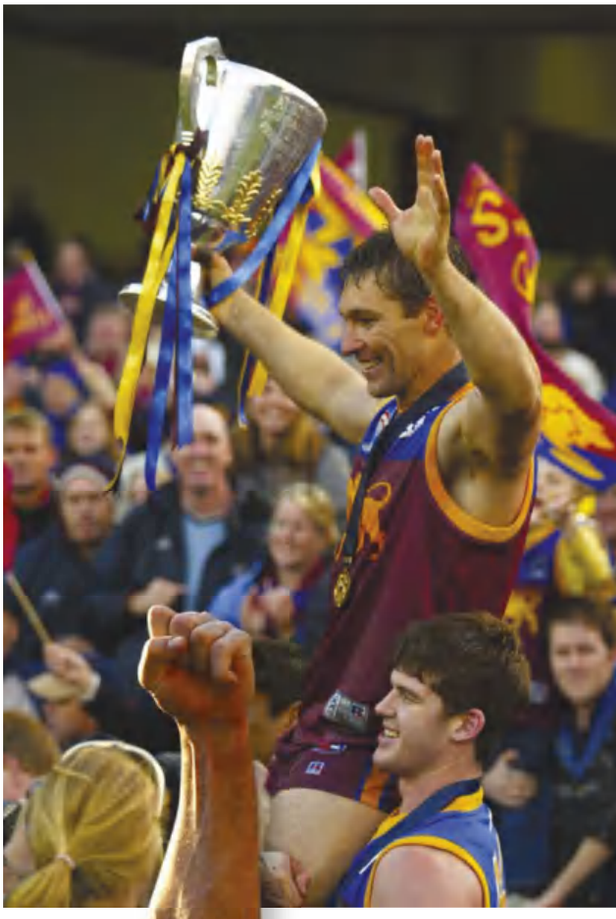
Where Hawt rn has excelled in recent years h been the recruitment of established yers with plenty – or in some cases, just enough – left in the tank to help them over the line. Two examples are **Stuart Dew** a **Brian Lake.**

Dew was a k reason for Port Adelaide's 200 vin. He retired, limp, limping, almos pent, in 2006, and left football completely. Then, in 2007, vitality renewed, he a ounced a comeback to choruses of "tl game's moved on, mate – no-one wants your type anymore."

Hawthorn took him. His hamstrings rebelled. With 13 games in 2008, it was doubtful he'd be selected for the finals. The critics were satisfied: ad hoc picks don't win Premierships, they said.

Dew was thrown into the Grand Final recipe and proved a piquant addition, his dazzling burst of two successive goals and two goal assists during a crucial phase of the third quarter turning Hawthorn's fortunes. At game's end, Dew was a two-time Premiership player.

In 2013, the Hawks were at it again. **Brian Lake** was a champion rebounding defender who'd subdued most of the game's best forwards at the Western Bulldogs. But most hard-arsed pundits discounted him as chronic knee injuries threatened. He was 31. The lowly 'Dogs willingly traded Lake in 2012. Hawthorn – again under Clarkson – took the punt. It was widely considered a mistake. Clarkson had surely got it wrong this time. Sure enough, the injuries didn't go away and Lake didn't play until round five. But at the conclusion of the winning 2013 Grand Final, the inconceivable had become reality. Brian Lake had a Premiership, and the Norm Smith







Darren Jolly [THIS PIC] was "past it". Alastair Lynch [TOP] moved north. Justin Madden [RIGHT] had to move out of his brother's shadow. Jack Gunston [FAR RIGHT] got homesick. And won.

medal around his neck for B-O-G. In 2014, he became a dual Premiership player.

PIE TIME

Collingwood have always backed their choices with loyalty and perseverance. **Darren Jolly**, like Dew, had already won a Premiership, but was generally considered "past it." The 'Pies picked him up from Sydney, recognising him as just the ingredient they needed. He'd begun an itinerant career with Melbourne, where he spent much of his time as second-string ruckman to Jeff White. After four seasons, he only managed 48 games. He was traded to Sydney for 2005, installed as a vital member of their ruck division, and wound up with a Premiership that very year. Unable to recapture their magic of 2005-06, Sydney traded him in 2010. He promptly won another with the 'Pies, again in his first year. In both cases, his team played the Grand Final the following year, and lost.

Jolly was no mere privileged passenger. In 2010 – the first, drawn game – Jolly got the tap out in that opening Grand Final ruck contest that is always accompanied by the most colossal crash of crowd noise. The ball made its way quickly toward Collingwood's goal square, where Jolly launched his bulk, marked, and goaled. How he got there so swiftly no-one knew, but he immediately stamped his presence. This man knew how to play a big game.

Four Grand Finals, two Premierships – not bad for a ruck discard who began as second-stringer at a third-rate team!



PHOTOS BY *Getty Images*

Collingwood also got **Luke Ball** for 2010. Ball's lack of a Premiership medal wasn't for lack of trying. He'd been prodigious for St Kilda, Collingwood's opponents that Grand Final day. Saints had made a few raids on the Premiership, unsuccessfully. Ball had been an excellent captain and leader, an all-Australian midfielder in an era of superb midfielders. The previous year, 2009, he'd stood amidst the Saints' miserable huddle as they digested a 12-point loss to Geelong in the Grand Final.

He, too, had been troubled by injury, and was generally suspected to be past his use-by date, despite a lucrative contract on the table from St Kilda. He was determined to leave, and Collingwood was his choice. At the end of the 2010 Grand Final replay, he stood victorious – a Premiership player at last – but feeling, keenly, the pain of his old teammates as he looked across at that familiar huddle. There, but for the grace of footy's gods ...

NORTH TO GLORY

Serendipity, a recruiter's whim, a coach's peremptory wish. Unforeseen paths to Premiership glory can suddenly, magically, open up for a player. In 1973, defection was almost unheard-of, until the original defector, Ron Barassi, became North Melbourne coach and promised Premierships to the club and an assortment of down-and-outers, ham-and-eggers and brigands who'd never con[illegible]plated the idea. There would be no "[illegible]uilding" – not for a dynamo like Barassi. The minute he arrived at the perpetually-impoverished Shinboners, he took swift a[illegible]ntage of an ephemeral initiative called the ten-year rule (which enabled players who'd served ten years at a club to move on unimpeded), and held the lure out to a band of champions.

Barry Davis, Doug Wa[illegible] and **John** were North's Big Three. Davis was a prolific, smart Essendon ba[illegible]an who'd done everyth[illegible]a Team of the Century player could do: two Premierships, three best-and-fairests, two years as captai[illegible]ter 218 games, he had al[illegible] hallmarks of a one-team player, but as in the case [illegible]ost evergreen champions, speculation rose like[illegible]iasma. He was 30, after all. Who'd have believed what he was about to achieve?

Wade stands with Lockett, Ablett senior and Dunstall as a player with over 1000 career goals – a big, powerful legend of a full-forward. He was 31, and after 208 games with Geelong, he, too, looked like a one-team man until the call from his old rival, Barassi. He spent three years at North, and the pointy end of his career turned out to be the pointiest of all.

John "Mopsy" Rantall was already a South Melbourne legend. Unlike his two cohorts, the magnificently skilled defender never experienced a Premiership, but deserved one. **Brent Crosswell** had already won two medallions with the Blues before Barassi got him across to North just in time for the Premiership year.

Grand Final 1975, they all shone. Wade produced an extraordinary display of Grand Final generalship. Davis became a Premiership captain. Rantall was unbeatable; Crosswell, best-on-ground.

That Grand Final was a grand finale for Wade and Davis, who retired after the win. Rantall returned to South. Crosswell won another with North in 1977.

Barassi also looked to the west and gave some of the game's best players, like **Barry Cable** and **Malcolm Blight**, their chance at a Premiership and fame, at a time when playing in Victoria was the only path to recognition for a deserving footballer. There have been many other instances of South and Western Australian recruits winning Victorian Grand finals, and often being the difference, during brief, shining AFL careers: **Peter Bosustow**, **Polly Farmer**, Cable and Blight are outstanding examples.

EYES ON THE PRIZE

Some stumble upon the right place; others are led there. Many steer themselves. Two modern instances of providential "desertion" were **Justin Madden** and **Alastair Lynch**. Madden left Essendon because the ruck position was occupied by the greatest of ruckmen: his brother, Simon. Justin's time at Carlton led him to be considered a ruck hero in his own right. On top of that, he collected the 1987 and 1995 Premierships.

Lynch left struggling Fitzroy before they merged with Brisbane. At the time, in 1994, Brisbane were still the Bears. The ▸

Jack Gunston

LEFT ADELAIDE, HOMESICK FOR MELBOURNE, AFTER ONLY 14 GAMES. HE'S PLAYED IN TWO WINNING GRAND FINALS SINCE.



All three of
ALASTAIR LYNCH'S PREMIERSHIPS WITH BRISBANE CAME WHEN HE WAS WELL INTO HIS 30S.

versatile and powerful Lynch was All-Australian full-back, and a goalkicker up the other end. All three Premierships with Brisbane came when he was well into his 30s, as Lynch's career had, since 1995, been frequently interrupted – and therefore probably prolonged – by chronic fatigue syndrome. In 1994, he'd never have imagined he'd be a key member of one of AFL's most formidable and accomplished Premiership-winning teams – for three consecutive years.

A man often mentioned in memos when greatness is discussed is **Greg Williams.** Overlooked by Carlton as a youngster, "Diesel" went on to shine at Geelong and Sydney, where he won a Brownlow in his first season. But no Premierships were in sight. By the end of 1991 he was restless for a return to Victoria. The Blues this time wanted him. Badly. They acquired him via a three-club deal. Williams played six seasons at Carlton, winning another Brownlow and collecting the famous '95 premiership win – and, of course, the Norm Smith medal.

THE DISCARDS

Many with CVs including Premiership honours were true discards. Their clubs were only too glad to bin them before some recruiter's intuition had them suddenly floating in a new soup, their late addition just the dash of flavour needed to enhance, or complement, more highly-regarded ingredients. A discard's lack of ability to add savour or nourishment might be soon found out but for the winning Premiership recipe they find themselves part of.

But good coaches extract maximum contribution. In fact, some make the critics rave with a recipe made almost *entirely* of cast-offs.

This was the key to Paul Roos' success in 2005, when he took an unlikely bunch to victory. The surprising Roos took a leaf out of the Hawthorn book, declaring, "Send us your rejects, your released, your refugees, your retirees, your refusers, your recycled, and we shall make Premiership players of them."

Added to Roos' sound coaching philosophy were little glints of insight, like arrows of silver. Roos was uninterested in bottoming out to get the best of the draft. No longer would Sydney rely on "names." They won that miraculous Premiership with footballing flotsam, none of whom would have envisioned such dizzying success when they joined: **Tadgh Kennelly**, a top Gaelic footballer, was part of the Irish experiment. **Craig Bolton,** disposed of by Brisbane after making it as far as a Grand Final emergency twice during their Premiership years. **Amon Buchanan**, delisted by his own club before Roos redrafted him. Captain **Barry Hall**, who left St Kilda to make way for a band of young forwards. **Paul Williams**, a good player in a mostly-unsuccessful Collingwood side before being traded to Sydney. His 294 games were, to that point, the most played before picking up a Premiership medallion. **Nick Davis**, the goal-sneak traded by Collingwood at the last minute in a deal that cost the half-reluctant Swans a second-round pick. The aforementioned **Darren Jolly**, who'd left Melbourne with a slender reputation and a lot of unknowns.

In 2012, John Longmire, who'd taken over Roos' role, was continuing the tradition. It led to another cup. **Mitch Morton** must have been rapt. The hard-working goal-kicker had been twice rejected, by West Coast and Richmond. Not many endorsed the decision to throw him into the Swans' broth. But it only cost them a pick 79. He was cheap. Longmire almost drew laughs when he declared Morton would add "depth and firepower." Morton was even dropped for round 23. He battled in reserves, got the call, played a great finals series, and collected himself the 2012 Premiership.

Rhys Shaw had been traded by Collingwood at the end of 2008, thus missing out on the 'Pies' 2010 Premiership. **Ted Richards** was an Essendon cast-off; **Martin Mattner** was a journeyman who'd done his dash, it was believed, with Adelaide. Then there were **Lewis Jetta**, overlooked in the 2007 draft; **Shane Mumford**, dropped by Geelong in time to miss out on their 2009 Premiership; **Josh Kennedy**, who, despite his Hawthorn pedigree, missed out on their 2008 Grand Final win and was traded after a mere 13 games; Canadian rugby union international **Mike Pyke**, derided as a "joke" when he first played AFL. Every Swan deserved his medal. There were no passengers. It was another astonishing, unlikely Premiership victory over a terrifyingly good opponent.

If Roos had begun as Sydney coach earlier, he'd probably have gone after **Mal Michael**, delisted by Collingwood in 2001 after 61 games. Papua New Guinea-born Michael was traded to Brisbane in 2000. By the end of 2003, he was a triple-Premiership player, lauded as a full-back sensation.

BACKDOOR CHAMPS

James Podsiadly came to own a medal via an unusual route. He was 28 when selected by Geelong as a mature-aged rookie, having taken a role as fitness coach and player for their VFL side. He turned out to be a sensation – a natural cult figure – and though he was subbed off with injury in the second quarter of the 2011 Grand Final, he nevertheless deserved his medal.

When it comes to ratio of games played to titles won, three of the more remarkable stories come from Carlton.

Brad Pearce is a name few recall, but he was a four-goal hero in Carlton's 1995 win. Delisted by Brisbane Bears in 1994, Pearce spent that year at Carlton mostly out injured. But his peak arrived suddenly in 1995, when his fast leading and accurate disposal contributed to a monster year for full-forward Steven Kernahan. As well as ▸

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his own goals, Pearce continued this habit in the Big One. Injury ruined his next four seasons, and with only 77 games for the Blues, he retired, but not before playing a key part in a fabled Premiership.

Mario Bortolotto had the distinction of playing his first and last games for the Blues on the same days Peter Bosustow achieved those milestones. While Bosustow was flamboyantly winning games up front, Bortolotto was a considered a journeyman backman, recruited despite being dumped by Geelong after 14 matches. Carlton grabbed Bortolotto, remembering that he once mugged their star forward Mark Maclure. Though he mainly warmed the pine in the 1981 Grand Final, he got on the ground, and actually played a decisive role in '82, holding the much bigger David Cloke to a few possessions, yet he only made that Grand Final side after full-back Rod Austin sustained a training injury. Mario's tally at Carlton: two sporadic seasons, 30 games, two Premierships.

Ted Hopkins was not a footballer of great success. But he was a man of value during his team's hour of need. In 1970, Carlton's Grand Final was looking decidedly unappetising by half-time. They trailed by 44 points. We all know about Jezza's famous mark, and Barassi's half-time injunction to "handball, handball, handball." But Carlton's fare had been bland, in need of zest. Otherwise it was all over before dessert. Hopkins was a 21-year-old who considered himself lucky to be anywhere near the first 18. His sudden half-time elevation was no fluke. But it was a roll of the dice.

Carlton kicked seven goals in the first 13 minutes of the third. Hopkins had three and set up another for Jesaulenko. For a brief, exhilarating time, the 1970 Grand Final was flavoured with a dose of Hopkins. Collingwood's faithful reached for their *Footy Record* in a flabbergasted attempt to find out who this smallish blond kid was. Hopkins tore Collingwood up with four goals, set up a few more and just missed a fifth. Then, Premiership medal around his neck, he retired to take up snow skiing and poetry and founded Champion Data, Champion Books and Backyard Press. His tally: 29 games, one Premiership.

2015 TRASH TO TREASURE

Of the teams most likely to give the 2015 finals a shake (leaving out Sydney and Hawthorn), here are the candidates for this year's "trash to treasure" award.

Richmond are the joker in this year's pack. By finals time, they might surprise more fancied sides with their gathering potency. If they win it, a few throwaways will be vindicated. **Ivan Maric**, a former basketballer, came to the game late. Maric saw the writing on the wall and left the Crows in 2011. Now he's an influential leader at Richmond, and a key to their recent success. **Shaun Grigg** saw little action with Carlton, received faint praise as an under-sized ruckman and was traded in 2011; every season since, he's grown in stature. Big **Shaun Hampson**, who had dodgy eyesight corrected in 2012, was traded by Carlton in 2013; now he's an invaluable ruckman/key forward. **Bachar Houli** was traded by Essendon after limited opportunities; he's now a bold attacking defender for the Tigers. **Taylor Hunt** floundered at Geelong; now he's been a driver back and centre with Richmond.

This year, Fremantle's **Zac Dawson** might become a Premiership medallist, but even membership of Ross Lyon's "perpetual runner-up" club would be better than what might have been. Dawson played 14 games for Hawthorn and 63 for St Kilda. He came close for Saints. They lost by 12 in 2009, and in 2010, the year they played Collingwood, he was St Kilda's player of the finals. As a vital link in Lyon's "defensive chain", he followed Lyon to Freo.

Danyle Pearce had a 154-game career at Port Adelaide. Having just missed Port's 2004 Premiership (he debuted the next year), Pearce saw some sparse years there. He was one of the first beneficiaries of limited free agency when Fremantle made a bid in 2012. **Luke McPharlin** had a so-so career for Hawthorn before moving to Freo in 2002. Known for taking spekkies and as one of the original "swing men" who can play at either end, he's been invaluable to the club. At 33, he's decided on this one last season. Will it be the one?

For Western Bulldogs, **Matthew Boyd**, at 33, will be glad he played on if the 'Dogs win this year. He's risen from draft reject to exceptional possession-winner. **Stewart Crameri** had a bright future at Essendon, blighted by the drug scandal; for 2014, he was traded to the Bulldogs. **Tom Boyd** will only be too glad to be gifted a Premiership, after hype, ridicule and angst accompanied his purchase by the Bulldogs from GWS as the highest-paid recruit of all time.

If West Coast win this year, **Josh Kennedy's** bitter trial will have become a blessing. Kennedy (not the Sydney player mentioned earlier), unwillingly packed off to the Eagles in the high-profile trade for Chris Judd, has developed into one of the best key forwards in the competition, capable of devastating multi-goal bursts, such as his 10 straight against Carlton (!) early this year, leading those who were disenchanted with Judd's stint at the Blues to wonder if the trade had been a mistake.

As he kisses his Premiership pendant, Kennedy might feel relief that he didn't get his wish to stay at Carlton. There are times when achievement in one place can prevent greater achievement in another. The path takes many twists, we leap at shadows, and sometimes, all the talent in the world won't get us there unless time and place, blind as they are to our worth, choose us. ■

Mario Bortolotto's TALLY AT CARLTON: TWO SPORADIC SEASONS, 30 GAMES, TWO PREMIERSHIPS.



Josh Kennedy was traded for Chris Judd an aeon or so ago. If he wins a Premiership, some might wonder if the trade was a blue ...

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OBE

SAFE HANDS

AT NEXT MONTH'S RUGBY WORLD CUP, A YOUNG WALLABY WILL TAKE THE FIELD IN THE NUMBER 10 POSITION AND PLAY A CENTRAL ROLE IN AUSTRALIA'S CHANCES. BUT WHO WILL GET THE GUERNSEY? *INSIDE SPORT* SELECTS BERNARD FOLEY.

By **MATT CLEARY**

WE CALL THEM "five-eighths" or "fly-halves". The Kiwis call them "first five-eighths" to differentiate from "second five-eighths", the position Australians call "inside centres", French call "le centre" and Poms may yet call "Sam Burgess". But today, in modern rugby-speak, the man one off the ruck, scrum, maul or line-out is a "10". And they're no less pivotal. And before each World Cup we trot one out and hope.

In '87 it was Michael Lynagh, the great "Noddy", who nearly got us there save for Serge Blanco. Four years later, Lynagh again, who won the '91 quarter-final against Ireland because he didn't give up or panic and just played rugby. And the William Webb Ellis trophy, "Bill", flew home on QF1. In '95 Australia were favourites but Lynagh was too old and slow, and the Wallabies were dropped out by Rob Andrew of England in the quarters.

But then came '99 and Stephen Larkham, the great lanky ghost, the almost preternaturally brilliant ball-flinger, the best one since Mark Ella. And Bill came flying home on the big red roo again. There followed Sydney, and Larkham almost got us home; only hard-bodied, destiny-infused, laser-focused England got in the way with a talismanic ten, Jonny Wilkinson.

Larkham was still about in '07 but too old and injured and out we went in the quarters, again, to England, again. And then four years later (and ago) the Kiwis' destiny was finally fulfilled and the Wallabies were smashed by the All Blacks. And for all Quade Cooper's derring-do and party-pants, he wasn't equipped for smart, cynical, "boring" Test rugby. And out the door we went.

And so here we are again, Australians, before another RWC, and the five-eighth, the 10, the pivotal pivot isn't carved in stone. We have ideas. But we don't have a lock. We *thought* we did, and you may have worked out who *Inside Sport* believed that would be. And still believes it should be ...

Now, it's true: Australian rugby does have some tasty 10s. There's the flashy, tattooed wild one, Cooper. There's skilful, dependable Christian Lealiifano, the best goal-kicker in the land. There's a tall 21-year-old bloke who plays for the Rebels, Jack Debreczeni, who could bolt into the squad. He looks good, Debbo, and you could YouTube him. You could also play hyper-skilled Kurtley Beale at 10 or the abrasive Matt Toomua. Matt Giteau's recently back from France and was put straight into the starting Wallabies "12", a massive plug for the man who piloted Toulon to a European Rugby Championship. James O'Connor? James O'Connor.

But for a 10 to depend upon in a World Cup, a fly-half you know will have a go and not stuff things up, who'll run the ball the Australian way, who'll be cool, who can kick goals under the pump, who is dangerous with ball in hand, who can pop one for a pig or see a hole wide and put his fullback through it, who can unleash multiple gain-line marauders, who can tackle Burgess or any other great thumping man-o-war who charges into the ten's heaving, tempestuous "channel", then please, sports fans, look no further than Waratahs man Bernard Foley.

And yet ... and yet Michael Cheika's keeping us guessing about who actually will be the Wallabies' starting 10 in the eighth quadrennial Rugby World Cup in England. As one journo suggested to this journo, "The answer is there's no answer." Cheika has all the players on high alert. Save the captain and Israel, there are no guarantees. Cooper was picked in the 10 for the first Test of the campaign. Cynics (journos) read into that coach's call that Cheika wants to keep Cooper in Australian rugby and is throwing him a bone: go well, play 10. And why not? At his bouncy best Cooper's a fun-running gun. And he's matured, as men do. ▸

PHOTO BY *Getty Images*





And his combination with Australia's best-performing Super Rugby halfback Will Genia is key. So Cooper got first dibs.

But Foley, surely, is the better, more effective rugby player. And given the respective recent successes of the Waratahs and Reds in the last two seasons, in which "Ws" attributed to each team read NSW 22, Queensland 8, then Foley is the man above Cooper or any of the other prospects for Wallabies number 10.

Now, *Inside Sport* lauded Cooper through the very roof following Queensland's Super Rugby win in '11 and fair enough, he was going gangbusters. But he and his fellow amigos, these flighty risk-merchants, have had their go. And now, if you want to actually up and *win* the Rugby World Cup, to actually beat the All Blacks – and South Africa, Ireland, England, Wales, France, whoever – in Test match rugby, in the northern hemisphere, on soft tracks, with referees and local media who think your scrum is full of soft-cocks, then you need a 10 who'll take the right options, who'll provide a threat with hand and foot, and kick all his goals under the game's biggest pumps.

And that, surely, is Bernard Foley.

ALO'S

Foley is the second-youngest child of six nominally Irish-Catholic kids brought up in Kenthurst in the Hills District of Sydney's greater north-west, a sprawling chunk of big block suburbia known for happy-clapping money-churches. And it's where Foley played rugby from U/6s to U/16s with his mates, and with his old man as coach.

But the joint couldn't hold him. And thus in Year 9 he headed to St Aloysius, the Jesuit joint between Luna Park and the PM's place in Kirribilli, a school where they teach with equal application rugby, chess, debating, drama.

IF YOU WANT TO ACTUALLY WIN THE RUGBY WORLD CUP, YOU NEED A 10 WHO'LL TAKE THE RIGHT OPTIONS, WHO'LL PROVIDE A THREAT WITH HAND AND FOOT.

Frank Clarke was first XV coach at "Alo's" and taught Foley. He remembers the boy had a "glint in his eye". "He was very respectful, popular with his peers and a pretty hard worker," says Clarke. "Very bright.

"We were aware of his ability when he came to us. And each year he just became better and better. When he crossed the line at training he wanted to know everything you had, and then some."

Yet Foley's wasn't talent writ so large that it screamed "Wallaby". He had time as the good young ones do. But Alo's didn't win a lot and Foley didn't make rep teams. Paul Cornish played three Tests for Australia and runs Waverley College's first XV. He coached Foley in Catholic Association Schools (CAS) seconds. He says the boy was "exceptional".

"I thought he was the best 10 that I'd seen for a long time," says Cornish. "He made a reasonable side without stars dangerous. They didn't win many but in the 10 he made it difficult to coach against. He always went to the line. He could pick out if 13 wasn't a good defender and throw a ball past him. He could get outside the man. There was always that skill.

"But he didn't really have the better players around him to get recognised as he should've. I was CAS firsts coach and tried to get him on early second half. I rated him. The guy they picked in the ones was good. But I thought Bernard offered more."

Clarke reckons his job was "just hold the clipboard". "His class really shone through. I don't call myself a coach with these blokes. Pat McCabe was another guy, a couple of years above him, loads of time, guts. And that's probably another of Bernard's real strengths. He's grown up tackling big kids out in the Hills district. No fear, just technique and ability. This year a giant Springbok No.8 came at him, he went around the legs, no problems.

"And in team talks, what he'd say at half-time, even in Year 11, it was bang on. He was two steps ahead of the coaches sometimes, reading the game."

Clarke remembers Foley scoring four tries in a match against Cranbrook, each







Bernard Foley can tackle giants, assert himself in elite company, choose the right options in attack ...

... and kick the Wallabies to a World Cup. But he needs to be on the paddock in the number 10 jumper to do it.

PHOTOS BY *Getty Images*

that he created and finished. Another game on tour to Brisbane, Alo's played famous Anglican Church Grammar School – "Churchie" – and flogged them 20-nil. At half-time they brought on another kid, Quade Cooper. And the pair went at each other. "And you knew straight away you had a couple of kids who were dynamite," says Clarke.

Despite Foley's lack of rep honours, Clarke and Cornish were sure he'd play at least provincial rugby – even if they were a little surprised how long it took. "He went to Sydney Uni and played Colts but I was really surprised he didn't play first grade earlier," says Cornish. "But he got a really good solid background, skills and learned how to be part of the culture. And that semi-professional background, that grounding, stood him in good stead for the next level rather than making it too early." Messrs Cooper, Beale and O'Connor might agree.

Though Foley never saw rugby as a career, he did enjoy improving. He says the program at Uni allowed him to train as hard as he wanted. "They had all the facilities and coaches there, the perfect environment. And coaches who really urged you to train hard. And we had a very good side, two seasons undefeated. Nick Phipps, Paddy Ryan, Michael Hodgson came out of those systems and excelled. I wasn't always fittest or best. But at Uni it taught you what was needed to take the step up."

SEVENS

In the spring of 2010 a week after his Colts were crowned premiers, Bernard Foley walked out of a lecture hall at Sydney University and saw a voice message on his phone. It was Mick O'Connor asking if he wanted to come to Canberra and train with the Australian Sevens squad. And though he had a night out planned with mates, it took him all of one second to say yes.

O'Connor had been at the grand final to look at another player, a fullback, but came away with Foley and halfback Nick Phipps. "They were outstanding," says O'Connor. "Bernard, particularly, had a hand in everything. Similar to how he plays today, how he throws himself into the game.

"So I invited them to Canberra, the AIS, where we had a camp space. We'd go down Friday morning, have an afternoon session, couple of Saturday sessions, one Sunday morning, then bus them out that afternoon."

And the pair hurled themselves at it, O'Connor struck by their manic work ethic. "It's a pretty full weekend, very little downtime. But whenever they did have time they were out practising, throwing lineouts. Incredible, they were so driven, they so wanted to succeed."

Foley went to Canberra by his own admission "unprepared and out of shape". Sydney Uni was great fun, the rugby was a bonus. He lived like a student, enjoyed a beer, didn't think at all about diet or cleanliness. But from that first day in camp onwards he was a professional player.

The testing was rigorous – speed, strength, skill, lung capacity. Something called a yo-yo (similar to a beep test) that Phipps broke the record for and Foley wasn't far off. "Their yo-yos set off bells straight away," says O'Connor. "If you know they have skill, lung capacity and propensity for work, they've got the makings of a decent Sevens player."

Foley enjoyed the marking, the testing, the professionalism. "It was good to see where you were at. By the time the squad went to the [2010] Commonwealth Games [in Delhi] we probably couldn't have been fitter, faster and stronger. Everyone was in top nick." A silver medal followed. And a life on ▸





tour. And for a 20-year-old who hadn't been overseas much, Sevens was a dream.

"I didn't know what the go was," smiles Foley. "You'd get to all these cities and cultures, and play in the big stadiums with big crowds. Y'know, 60-80,000 people. It was an eye-opener. But I really enjoyed it."

And he trained harder again. Like Cooper Cronk and Robbie Farah, league men with whom Foley shares height, balance, smarts and work ethic, he worked to improve himself to a fault. Says O'Connor: "Didn't matter where we were, Wellington, Dubai, Vegas, Bernard would find a field to practise. Our bus usually had to wait for him."

Yet Foley could be loose, as 20-year-olds can be. As Sydney Uni coach Chris Malone says dryly, "He's an Australian male." O'Connor sees something of himself in Foley. "He didn't mind a party," he says. "And he wasn't used to showing up on time. He could get a bit relaxed around that because he hadn't been in a professional program. Though he was far more mature than I was at the same age. But in saying that, he was still a boy. He was very popular, the boys liked him. Bit loose in other areas. He was a uni student, he liked having a few beers, and that's fine.

"But the Sevens was good for him because we could take those edges off him. When you're away on a Sevens tour, back-to-back tournaments, you pretty much can't drink. It's like running a marathon and backing up. You have to really prepare well."

O'Connor says Foley always had propensity to learn, to get better. And he's wicked smart. "You wouldn't believe it but he is," smiles O'Connor. "Studied accountancy. Dad's a lawyer. Good family. Big family, lot of girls. And he's close to them.

"And he was popular with the boys because he'd instigate games of cricket. He loves cricket, he's an encyclopedia of cricket, loves getting a bat and ball, having a hit. Really good team player."

Good player period. After a year of playing Sevens rugby he was among the best players in the world.

"AS MUCH AS WE'RE WILLING TO PLAY ATTACKING RUGBY, YOU CAN'T DO IT AT THE DETRIMENT OF RESULTS. YOU HAVE TO BE SMART." – BERNARD FOLEY

THE KICK

Foley signed with the Waratahs in 2011 and changed his body. He prepared it for contact with giants. He worked on explosiveness, on effectiveness in breakdown melees, trying to dominate in contact. And he kicked goals until the sun went down.

Last game of '11 he came off the bench. First game of 2012, the derby against Queensland, he came off the bench again. Next game he started. Scored a try. Loved it. Felt comfortable, felt he could perform consistently; that he could do what he'd done at every level.

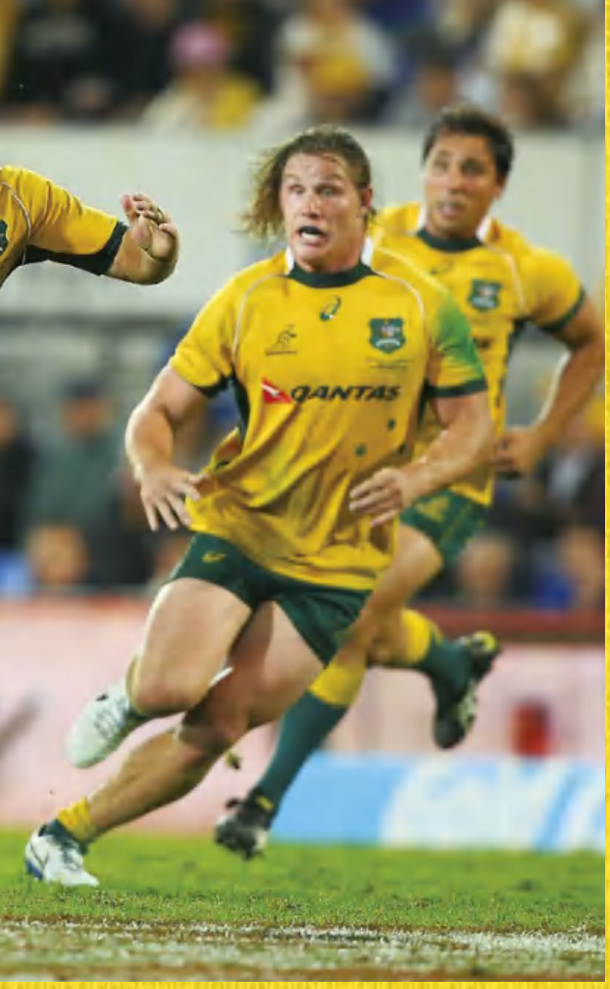
Middle of 2012 he was called into the Wallabies' squad for the series against Wales. Second Test in Melbourne he was 24th man, the "only person in Australia hoping Berrick Barnes' wife would stay in labour longer", he jokes. He moved to five-eighth from fullback, had a season at 10 for the Tahs but missed the Lions series. For the Rugby Championship they took him on tour. After landing in Argentina from South Africa coach Ewen McKenzie pulled himself aside. Told him: *You're in, riding the bench for the Test. Go well, son.*

"For a boy growing up in Kenthurst, one of six kids, all who used to love our rugby, who dreamed of playing for Australia growing up, to get that call, that acknowledgement ... " Foley's voice trails off. He's a pretty good talker, our Foles. But he's up against it.

And then, August 2, 2014, cometh the hour cometh the man. Against the mighty Crusaders of New Zealand's south island the Waratahs were down by two with two to play. They mauled and drove the ball upfield. Didn't panic. Won a penalty, 45 metres out. As Rod Kafer said excitedly on Fox Sports, "Oh, it's *right* on his limit."

Foley lined it up. Went through his process. Thought only about how good it would be if the ball went over, how much Allianz Stadium would lift, the noise of the 42,000. He took his pose. Took a final look at the posts. And moved in.

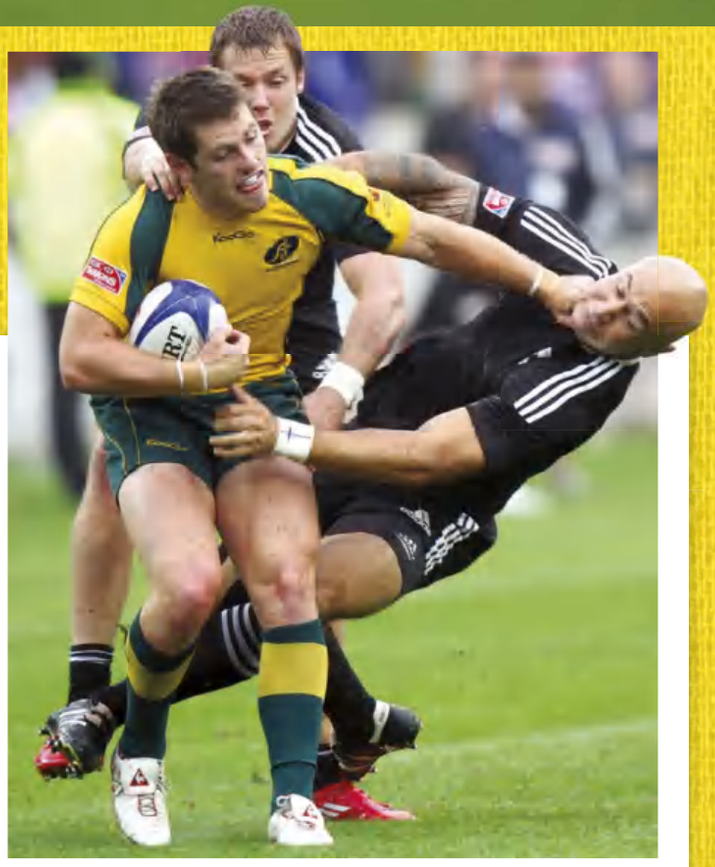
Thump. Struck it well! And straight! The ball floated high and long, tumbling like a long drop punt. Would it make it? Would it? Would it ...





He knows what his Wallaby coach will be thinking. He's already won trophies under Michael Cheika for the Waratahs [FAR LEFT].

Sevens gave him his break in the gold jersey [RIGHT]. Now he's looking to shine on the world stage at next month's World Cup.



Yes it would. And everyone lost their shit.

"It was an amazing feeling," says Foley. "After we got the penalty all I was thinking was how good would this place be if this kick goes over; I'd love to make this place erupt. And I remember after, seeing the look on everyone's face, the joy and happiness. The people in the crowd, most of all my parents."

And thus beer did flow. In the sheds, in a private room at flash nightclub Ivy in town, and finally back at Foley's pad in Bondi well into Sunday morning. "My parents were out the latest they've ever been, like 4am," says Foley. "But it was a one-night thing and we tried to enjoy it for sure."

THE CUP

Foley is Mick O'Connor's Wallaby 10 heading into the World Cup. He's Paul Cornish's, too, and Chris Malone's, and Damien Hill's and Waratahs' coach Daryl Gibson's, who'd partner him with Will Genia. Rod Kafer would partner Foley with Nick Phipps but given he rates combinations, and says that Genia is the best halfback around ... "It's a tight one."

O'Connor, though, is in no doubt. "What sets him apart, I think, from any 10 in Australia is his ability just to recycle ball. He won't throw 50-50 passes or try the spectacular. He'll just take it in. And NSW have been able to build their game on that. He's patient, he can play out phases. He can pick out weaknesses; he's done his research, analysis. He prepares well. His running and support lines are similar to those he ran in Sevens. And for a player like that who can start a movement and finish it, you've got to go back to Mark Ella."

Malone reckons Foley would "100 per cent" know he's got competition from hot players for the Wallabies 10. "And that's a good thing for Bernard and a good thing for Australian rugby. Not that he needs much motivation, but it'll certainly drive him.

"One thing that's always set Bernard apart is his mindset. He has absolute belief and faith in his ability. It comes from knowing he's done the work. I remember in 2013, the club rugby grand final, Bernard was our five-eighth but spent the week before the match with the Wallabies in Perth. Now, every other coach in the world would probably be stressing they didn't have their number 10 training in the backline all week. But he got back on the Friday night and I was struck by the belief and faith. He absolutely knew the game and he was going to go hard."

It's the Australian way, says Foley. "It's the reason we all played rugby when we were little, to throw the ball around. And we want to attack and score tries and that philosophy won't change. With the calibre of players in the squad, with so many attacking weapons, we can challenge any defensive system in the world. We'll be looking to attack and score tries and impose ourselves.

"In saying that, we'll have to be smart and understand our environment, our surroundings, our opposition, the conditions, the Northern Hemisphere. As much as we're willing to play attacking rugby, you can't do it at the detriment of results. You have be smart.

"But with Cheik, and Stephen Larkham as backs coach, we've got some really good strategies about how to have a balanced game, using kicking as a weapon and being dangerous and scoring tries, and playing that Australian way that we all want to do."

(And yes, Michael O'Connor did just evoke Mark Ella.) ■

PHOTOS BY *Getty Images*

DROPPING THE BALL



AS OUR POLITICIANS STRUGGLE TO FIND WAYS TO DERADICALISE MUSLIM YOUTHS AND TURN THEM AWAY FROM JIHADIST IDEOLOGY, THEY TALK COMMITTEES, BEEFED-UP SECURITY, LOSS OF CITIZENSHIP. BUT MAYBE THEY SHOULD TALK SPORT ...

By **RAMY HAIDAR**

PHOTO BY *Getty Images*



Hazem El Masri, a hero in Sydney's south-west during his playing days. But the last practising Muslim to play in the NRL: he retired in 2009.

IT'S BEEN two decades since Hazem El Masri arrived on the rugby league scene, making his first-grade debut in 1996 for the Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs. By the time he retired in 2009 he held the record for the most points scored in the NRL competition. And he also held the distinction of being the first Muslim to play the code at this elite level.

It's debatable which is the more significant achievement. For many Australians, this country's Muslim population remains largely hidden from everyday view, except in the context of news reports. When playing for the Bulldogs, El Masri was one of the few Muslims seen by the wider population doing "ordinary" things – though there was nothing ordinary about his footballing ability. El Masri was indeed, as his nickname suggested, "magic".

El Masri knows what he did. "Mainstream Aussies got to see my honesty," he says. "Any questions that they had, I was always happy to answer. To get to know each other removes ignorance towards Islam, and once people know the wisdom behind Islam they get behind us. The fact that I was in first grade encouraged my community to learn about other beliefs as well. I am learning new things all the time about the Polynesian and Indigenous cultures."

But the simple fact remains: there hasn't been a practising Muslim playing rugby league at the top level in Australia since his retirement. What could be the reason behind the absence of players progressing? "I ask that question too," says El Masri. "We need more Muslims out there. Times are changing as Muslim parents are becoming more dedicated towards their children's sporting goals. Hopefully the next Muslim NRL player is on the way."

As the 39-year-old points out, the Muslim community themselves have a duty: "To assimilate correctly, you must be honest, work hard and give respect, which would then allow us to remove misconceptions about Muslims. And working hard is more than applying yourself for two years, it is for a lifetime. For example, rather than complain about fasting and training, which I see some boys do, they must instead use this challenge to their advantage. And the higher the profile Muslims achieve, the better it is for everyone because it reminds Aussies that we also contribute to society. When that happens, everybody wins."

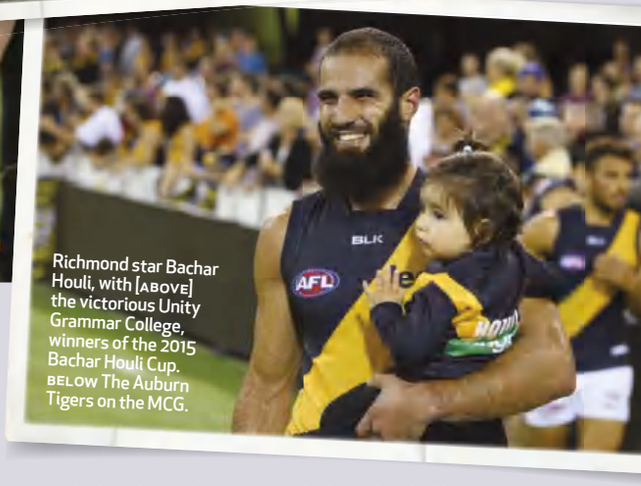
The NRL has already set a precedent in prioritising pathways for certain communities. In its Reconciliation Action Plan, the NRL has pledged to increase the participation rate of Indigenous players from 12 percent to 15 percent at an elite level by 2017. It is a laudable ambition, of course, but astoundingly there is no comparable roadmap for Muslims, even though there are 476,300 Muslims in Australia, just short of the number of Indigenous Australians.

It doesn't add up. And in some cases, the consequences can be disastrous.

Taha El Baf was a promising young league player, a 17-year-old with a deep passion ▸







Richmond star Bachar Houli, with [ABOVE] the victorious Unity Grammar College, winners of the 2015 Bachar Houli Cup. BELOW The Auburn Tigers on the MCG.

for the NRL, and considered to have the potential to make a career out of the game. However his drive and energy was diverted by online radicals who recently lured the young teen overseas. Last November, the tall centre fled his home in Yagoona, in Sydney's west, along with two of his brothers, to fight in Syria, much to the anguish of his parents.

Why would a footy-loving product of the public school system feel so detached that he would abscond to the dangers of Damascus? According to Taha's older brother, Mouhamed, the issue involved discrimination. "Taha was a very good player for the Regents Park Pumas, but the problem was there was no-one there to see him," he says. "There's no development in the area, because all the scouts go to areas with different cultures. In all our years there, not even one scout ever turned up! It doesn't suit them to watch us. I guess they prefer to go watch players closer to the city from different backgrounds."

Would more involvement from the NRL possibly have prevented his brother from fleeing overseas? "It could have been a totally different story," Mouhamed says. "It might have made him feel attached, but despite his performances there were never any development officers watching. He really wanted to make the NRL as he was a big Bulldogs fan like the rest of the family. The fact is that he felt ignored."

Brother Mouhamed points out that Taha's frame of around 190cm and 90kg certainly ensured he had the physical requirements. "He had the size, great ball-handling and a strong step giving him many man-of-the-match awards. He wasn't Benji Marshall, but with some kind of development his talent might not have been wasted."

The rugby league adage of course goes that "if you're good enough you'll get there." Wouldn't traditional selection paths ensure the fairest approach? To that, the 30-year-old brother Mouhamed retorts: "Hazem El Masri was the last player to make it all those years ago, and there have been none since. Our community is a large one and there are heaps playing the game. Are you seriously telling me there are no talented Muslim boys? Not even one player? None? Is that logical? Tell me how that can be possible?"

IN THE competition between the major football codes for the allegiances of Australians, the AFL has a far better record for establishing elite pathways programs directed at multicultural players. The Bachar Houli Program, for instance, targets around 5000 players from Islamic schools across Australia. The very best players are identified, then given leadership courses as well as opportunities to train with Houli's Richmond Tigers with a view to getting an AFL contract. This high-performance group will soon be expanded from 25 to 35 players. The program has received a $200,000 grant through the federal Attorney-General's department.

Bachar Houli is one of just a handful of Muslims playing in the AFL; the Tigers midfielder is more than happy to put his name and energy behind the program. "We've had really positive feedback about the inclusiveness of our program," he says. "There's a place in our game for all cultures and backgrounds, and our program supports and encourages diversity in AFL and sport in general. The program has helped participants with their football abilities, but also reminds them to feel proud to be Muslim.

"I'm really proud and humbled with the encouragement and positive feedback I've received from all levels of the community about my program. It's rewarding to know that this program, which has so much support from the AFL, the federal government, Australia Post and the



WHY WOULD A FOOTY-LOVING PRODUCT OF SYDNEY'S WEST FEEL SO DETACHED THAT HE WOULD ABSCOND TO THE DANGERS OF DAMASCUS?

Richmond Football Club, is making a positive difference to both the Muslim and broader Australian community. I've been fortunate to see it grow to a national level in a short amount of time."

Besides the Houli program, the AFL also holds annual Ramadan dinners in Sydney and Melbourne allowing administrators to network and better connect with the Muslim community. Elsewhere in Sydney, the Greater Western Sydney Giants employ two Muslim community engagement officers.

One major obstacle preventing Muslims from attending football fixtures relates to the requirement for adherents to pray five times a day at specified times. Consequently, the AFL now insists all of its major venues provide prayer rooms, ensuring community engagement has the potential to develop to its fullest potential.

The AFL's head office makes its stance on the issue clear: "Fundamental to the AFL's diversity strategy, the Bachar Houli Program aims to strengthen leadership, promote values and provide unique football development opportunities for young Muslim men aspiring to play AFL football. The program uses sport as a vehicle for social cohesion and we are excited to see it grow in 2015, particularly in Western Sydney, the multicultural hub of Australia."

AUSTRALIA'S Muslim community has recently been at the centre of heated political debate regarding national security. Yet amid the mass media hype and the millions spent by Government on counter-terrorism measures, very little dialogue has centred on the role that sport can play in order to better connect with this sometimes disengaged group.

Events across the globe have resulted in Australia facing perhaps its greatest test of social harmony. Amongst this backdrop, an auspicious change has transpired; the Muslim community's desire to build bridges and better connect with Australian sport has grown.

Dr Anne Azza Aly is an expert in the field of countering violent extremism. But the Associate Professor at Curtin University points out that sport, and in particular the NRL, has not done all it can to engage minority groups.

"Any organisation has a social responsibility to be inclusive," Dr Azza Aly explains. "They have an obligation as a socially responsible organisation to look at gifted and talented pathways. Identifying and engaging the Muslim community through training camps and specific programs in Islamic schools is necessary, just as the AFL has done so successfully. If they were to be leaders and do that, the community will respond. Without outreach, nothing will change."

Counter-terrorism is top of the government's agenda, yet according to Dr Azza Aly: "There is a tangible benefit in preventing radicalism. These youths are being targeted and there is a need to engage them in the quintessential Aussie game. This would develop a bond and allow them to feel Australian."

Muslim community leader Dr Jamal Rifi has attempted to foster that NRL-Muslim relationship. "I have spoken with Raelene Castle [Canterbury Bulldogs CEO] ▸

PHOTOS BY *Getty Images*



A (TOO) SHORT LIST

Current elite Australian Muslim athletes

BACHAR HOULI
AFL, midfielder with Richmond Tigers (Lebanese descent)

ADAM SAAD ➤
AFL, defender with Gold Coast Suns (Egyptian descent)

AHMAD SAAD
AFL, forward pocket and wingman with St Kilda Saints (Egyptian descent)

FAWAD AHMED ➤
Cricket, Australian and Victorian spin bowler (Pakistani descent)

USMAN KHAWAJA
Cricket, Australian and Queensland batsman (Pakistani descent)

ALI ABBAS
Soccer, winger and midfielder with Sydney FC (Iraqi descent)

MUSTAFA AMINI
Soccer, midfielder with Borussia Dortmund (Nicaraguan and Afghani descent)

KEREM BULUT ➤
Soccer, Iraklis Greek Super League (Turkish descent)

TAREK ELRICH
Soccer, defender with Adelaide United (Lebanese descent)

ANTHONY MUNDINE
Boxing (Indigenous Australian)

BILLY DIB
Boxing (Palestinian and Lebanese descent)

CARMEN MARTON ➤
Taekwondo, Olympian and World Champion (Polish Descent)



about involving the Bulldogs club in targeting the disaffected youth in the area,'' says Dr Rifi. ''We need another rugby league ambassador.''

For her part, Castle says her club is developing a new program explicitly targeting Muslims. ''It's something we are in the process of finalising. It's twofold. It is to encourage young people to make good decisions. The second part is as a pathway into becoming high-performance athletes.''

Sydney's south-west is rugby league's heartland; more than 44,000 Muslims reside in the catchment assigned to the Canterbury Bulldogs. According to Castle, her contact with the community has been a great experience. ''There are absolute positives about working with the Muslim community. While on one hand Muslims need to integrate, we also need to educate mainstream Australia. If we get Muslims playing league at the top level, they will become the norm.''



ONE SHINING example of success has been taking the field this winter in Sydney's west. In 2011, Amna Karra Hassan decided to form the Auburn Tigers women's AFL team, managing to attract a predominantly Muslim playing list, fusing the iconic AFL vest with the traditional Muslim hijab headscarf. Her initiative attracted the commercial sector, with Harvey Norman's director Katie Page deciding to sponsor the women's team.

An employee of the Australian Federal Police, Karra Hassan beams with pride as she speaks of her team. ''I am a big dreamer – and dreams do come true. We now have the support to groom athletic girls.''

Around three-quarters of the club's players are from Islamic background. Can having a team so concentrated with one religion be advantageous? Karra Hassan thinks so: ''The conversations we have around religion, culture and contemporary news allows us to share our beliefs with mainstream Aussies and challenge each other's stereotypes and assumptions. Regardless of background, questions are coming from curiosity, not bigotry or racism, and there is something very powerful in that. For women who haven't interacted with Muslims, having just one positive experience is more powerful than any negative media exposure,'' explains the 26-year-old.

Part of the advisory board for Multicultural NSW, Karra Hassan also believes Muslims might increase the value they place on sport. ''In the past, a lot of our girls never engaged in sport. Education was their priority, as the migrant mentality is to earn money, whereas to broader Aussies sport is much more critical. So Muslims need to embrace that view, and over time it has progressed. Our Islamic beliefs and Aussie Rules football share the same values of fairness.''

In fact Islam has a deep-rooted connection and respect for sport; in one of Islam's most important texts, *The Hadith*, swimming, archery and horse-riding are stated to be encouraged by the most esteemed figure in Islam, the Prophet Muhummad (peace be upon him). Such explicit references to sport debunk any theory of incompatibility. In fact, sport is one quintessentially Australian past-time that is in total harmony with Islamic doctrine.

But along with the successful participation of Muslims come the associated complications of managing religious sensitivities. The United States, for example, has had a long and proud history of elite Muslim athletes, most notably in the NFL and NBA. But when Kansas City Chiefs safety Husain Abdullah lay down face first after scoring a touchdown in 2014, he was penalised for violating the code's celebration rules; in fact, Abdullah was re-enacting the Sajdah, a religious prayer – akin to a Christian's raised eyes to the heavens in celebrations, or in the case of Tim Tebow, dropping to one knee and bowing his head before a game.

No doubt we have a way to go before our religious differences are celebrated rather than sanctioned. But sport is one way Australians can pick up the ball. And some sports are slow on the uptake ... ■

SPORT IS ONE QUINTESSENTIALLY AUSTRALIAN PAST-TIME THAT IS IN TOTAL HARMONY WITH ISLAMIC DOCTRINE.



Husain Abdullah was sanctioned for his prayer of celebration in the NFL. ABOVE The Auburn Tigers, invited to play on the sacred turf of the MCG back in June. *That's* what we're talking about ...

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

The Australian Sports Commission has a division called "Play By the Rules" that guides sports officials on religious sensitivities. In order to encourage Muslim youth to participate at an amateur level, the Commission has drawn up a set of recommendations cautioning officials about:

- Training or playing days that conflict with religious observation
- Not providing a place or appropriate environment for observation of prayer
- Conforming to a dress code
- Providing only communal change rooms
- Gender mixing at practices and games and or team transport
- Tolerance or appropriateness of sponsors or advertising logos on team uniforms that contradict religious observation (eg gambling, loan companies, alcohol).

For more information: ***www.playbytherules.net.au***

PHOTOS BY *Getty Images*

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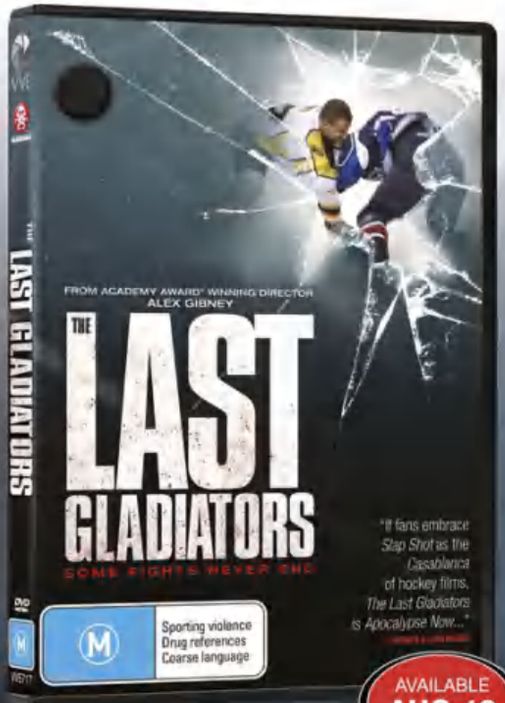
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Ange Postecoglou

January 31, 2015, marks a watershed moment in Australian sports history. It was the moment the Socceroos won their first major international tournament, what's more, in front of a legion of adoring fans as the host nation. Led by Mile Jedinak and the greatest player in Australian History, Tim Cahill, Australia stood up when it counted!

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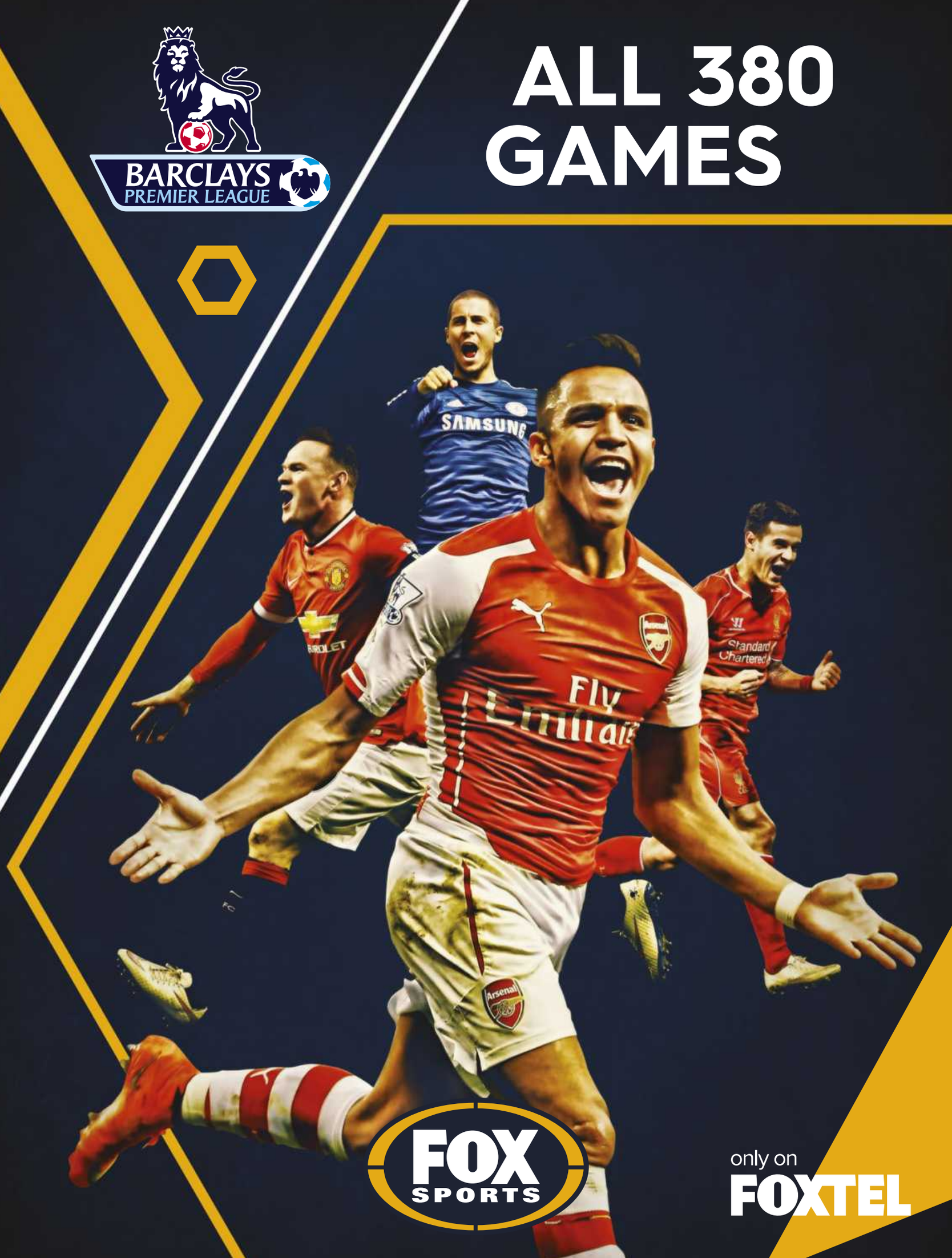
Ain't it grand? Well, almost. Serena Williams completed the third leg of the Slam with victory over Spaniard Garbine Muguruza, claiming her sixth Wimbledon and 21st major career title. Flushing Meadows, the US Open and history awaits.

PHOTO BY Julian Finney / Getty Images



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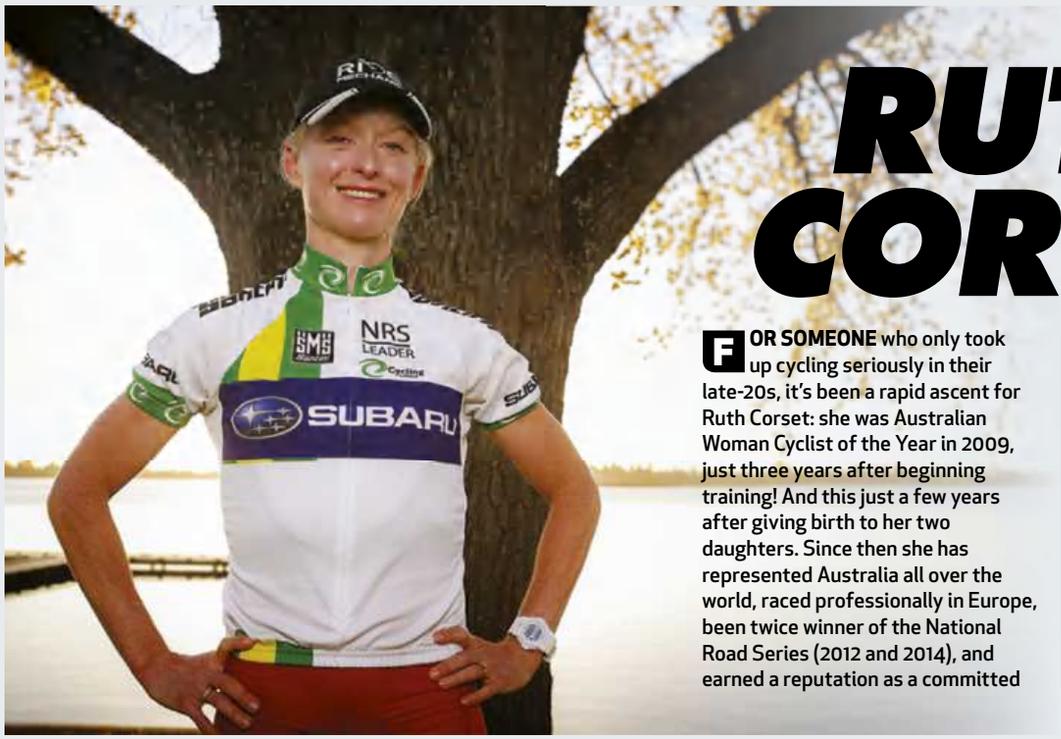
mvp



PLANET GYM

▲ Yup, they were the Real thing, here on Australian carpet ... Cristiano Ronaldo (right) and Marcelo of Real Madrid make use of the gym facilities (after a fashion) at AAMI Park in Melbourne last month ahead of matches against Inter Milan and Manchester City. Heavyweights? You bet.

PHOTO BY *Getty Images*



RUTH CORSET

FOR SOMEONE who only took up cycling seriously in their late-20s, it's been a rapid ascent for Ruth Corset: she was Australian Woman Cyclist of the Year in 2009, just three years after beginning training! And this just a few years after giving birth to her two daughters. Since then she has represented Australia all over the world, raced professionally in Europe, been twice winner of the National Road Series (2012 and 2014), and earned a reputation as a committed team rider, tenacious climber and fierce competitor. Her days riding overseas are over – being snubbed for the team for the London Olympics had something to do with that. But this month she starts over and takes aim again at another National Road Series title at the King Valley Tour in Victoria. All while juggling a home massage business and very full family life (it helps that husband Jason doubles as her coach). She told *Inside Sport* editor Graem Sims how she does it.



BEGINNINGS

"I was born in Papua New Guinea and spent my first ten years in East Sepik province – my parents were missionaries. We didn't have TV or anything to occupy us – and there wasn't much cycling over there! We didn't even have sport as a subject at school – we just made our own fun in the bush. We'd always be outside running around and swimming in the river. But then we moved to Townsville when I was ten and I found out I could run during high school – I really enjoyed cross country. After finishing school I got interested in triathlons and that's when I met Jason, my husband. He was a cyclist but his dad was a triathlete – I actually met Jason through his father.

"I was just competing for fun – I didn't know what hard training was. I really wish I knew back then what I know now! I didn't have a coach and was just doing local races. Then I got married and had my first girl when I was 24 and my second two years later. When the children were a few years old I wanted to get back into triathlons but I decided to just stick with the one discipline, cycling, because it was too hard to train for all three.

"It wasn't until I was 29, after I had the girls, that I decided to get a bit serious and compete in the Australian Country Club Championships. So Jason helped me train for that – he'd been a cyclist since he was ten, so he started coaching me. So I won that and that encouraged me to train for other races. Within two years I was racing for Australia over in Europe. I also raced for two different pro teams: Jazz Apple was my first team, New Zealand-based, and then I raced for Tibco, an American-based team. I came fourth in my first World Cup, in Montreal in Canada."

IMAGES LEFT, RIGHT AND TOP BY *Kathy Watt*. OTHER IMAGES COURTESY *Cycling Australia*.







FAST RESULTS

"I think Jason knew straight away that I was very good on the hills – he could see that. But I wish I'd started when I was younger. I raced the World Championships that year as well in Switzerland [2009], and I came 12th in that, and then I won the Nationals road race the year after in 2010. Also in 2009 I won Australian Cyclist of the Year, the same year as Cadel Evans, who'd won the World Championships that year in Switzerland.

"It all happened so quickly. The more I got into it the more I improved – but I didn't really realise how high I was getting. I'm a very competitive person, so when I started getting results I just wanted to get more and more – I knew I could do better. And I was getting those results oversees, and I knew I could do better if I had a bit more experience. But it was very hard being away from the girls – I would have to be away for six to eight weeks at a time. The AIS was very good in that they let me go over for small trips, but it was really hard. The girls handled it really well, though, and I had a lot of family support – Jason's mum helped a lot and my sister and my parents would come up from Brisbane while I was away. My husband is a school teacher so he was also able to fit everything around that. He was pretty tired from being so busy, but he was always so positive and supportive. As my coach he knows how hard I train and how much I put in, so he has been my number-one support."

"JASON KNEW STRAIGHT AWAY THAT I WAS VERY GOOD ON THE HILLS. BUT I WISH I'D STARTED WHEN I WAS YOUNGER."

SUPER MUM

"My weekdays are pretty busy, because I train every day, early in the mornings. The alarm goes off at about 4am and I'm on the bike for between two and three hours, a bit longer on the weekends. Jason kicks me out of bed when I sleep through my alarm. I'm mainly out riding by myself, but I try and get some other guys to come with me to help push me if I can. I do a lot of hill work and time trial efforts.

"I'm back by 7.30 to get the girls to school, then I've got my own massage business at home so I work the school hours, 8.30 to 2.30, ▸







"I DIDN'T GET SELECTED FOR LONDON. DID IT HURT? YEAH, IT DID. I THINK IT WAS TO DO WITH MY AGE."

though Mondays I work until 8.30 to 9 at night – that's my long day, which leaves me pretty exhausted.

"I do core work for about 15 minutes a day, just before I pick the girls up. I use a Swiss ball, planking mainly, lots of different Pilates-type exercises – I find that helps a lot with cycling.

"After I pick the girls up from school I'm taking them to all their different sports – Jason rides in the afternoons. I don't have time to do gym sessions. I will drop the girls at their gymnastics in the afternoon, then quickly duck home and do a short wind trainer session for an hour. It's very intense.

"I do my motor-paced sessions on the weekends. Jason is out there with me on Saturday mornings with the girls in the car. When they were young we'd have to drag them out of bed early – they'd be in the back seat half asleep while Jason is driving, and there's Mum in the rear-vision mirror ... I'd be there gritting my teeth and trying to hang on."

BLOCKS

"We've had a three-month break from the National Road Series [NRS] through winter, so I mix it up and do a bit of running and mountain biking as well – I've done a few mountain bike races up here just for fun. I like to maintain a certain amount of fitness in the off season, but I enjoy doing whatever I feel like on the day instead of having a structured program. But now that I'm full-on training for NRS, I have put the mountain bike away.



"I've been doing a solid training block for my next NRS race at the end of August, the King Valley Tour in Victoria. A month out Jason writes me a structured program. About a week before the race I will begin my taper and back right off – I cut back my mileage completely. I still do a few efforts so that the legs are still firing, ready to go hard when I race, but I back it off completely; I make sure I'm completely rested coming into a tour. When I arrive for a race I like to feel like I'm jumping out of my skin."

THWARTED DREAMS

"I went to the Commonwealth Games in 2010 in Delhi, and thought I'd finish up my career after London. But there was just a lot of politics and I didn't get selected, even though I was the best-performed road cyclist at the time. Did it hurt? Yeah, it did. I was aiming for the Olympics ... I think it was to do with my age and they







IMAGES BY *Cycling Australia*

wanted to support younger girls. They didn't want to put money into me unless they knew I could get a medal. So I made a very sudden decision and said that's it – I didn't want to be away from my family any longer. And yes, I actually retired before I wanted to. It was very hard – when I came back home I didn't want to touch my bike at all. That was in 2011.

"But I knew I had to do *something*, like enter a race, to force myself to get out of bed and do some sort of exercise, so I entered the Cairns half ironman and decided to train for that – I knew once I entered I'd have to train for it. But then I got a phone call asking if I wanted to join the Pensar-SPM team. I thought I might as well do one race – it was before Cairns and I thought I'll be fit. And so I did and won it, and then I thought maybe I'll do *another* one – and that's how I got back into cycling.

"I can't see myself stopping. Sometimes I feel like I'm over it and I don't want to race any more, but I think that's just my body telling me I need a bit of a break. Once I've had the break, I'm really keen to get back and go again."

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS

"My diet has always been very good. I eat a lot of fruit and veges, and I eat fish probably three times a week. But I think athletes need more than a normal diet. I'm lucky to be sponsored by Usana. They do a range of supplements – they have a health pack, which is a range of different vitamins. It gives me so much more energy during the day. I also have the Usana Coenzyme Q10, which is very good for the heart. And I'm also sponsored by Endura; I have one of their protein/carbohydrate shakes after every session, because I find that helps so much with my recovery for the next day.

"My husband has always been amazed by how much I eat. For breakfast I'll have porridge with two different fruits and mixed nuts and yoghurt on top, then a poached egg on toast with a coffee. I try not to have too much bread – I eat a lot of brown rice, so for lunch I have brown rice next to salad and tuna. I don't like too much processed food, so for snacks I'd just have plain yoghurt with nuts and honey if I feel like something sweet.

"Just before a race I always have a coffee and an Endura protein bar. I don't like to chew while I'm racing, but I'll have an Endura gel every 20 minutes during a race to get me through."

FINGER TREATMENT

"I do massage for a living, mainly deep-tissue sports massage. It helps to have a good friend who lives close by who is also a masseur, because we can do swaps. So I make sure I get weekly massage – it's very important. I find it helps so much with my recovery. If I miss it for some reason I find my legs feel heavy and I just can't back up each day."

HURT FACTOR

"When things get tough during a race, I just say to myself, 'If *I'm* hurting, then *they're* hurting just as much if not more than me.' It's the person who can get through that ... so I keep saying to myself the more I push the more they're going to reach their limit in a minute and drop off. I guess it's a mind game – especially racing over in Europe. So many are at the same level of fitness and strength that it *definitely* becomes a mind game."





VICTOR'S VICTUALS

EAT LIKE A WINNER WITH THESE NUTRITIOUS MEALS THAT ARE A SNACK TO PREPARE.



CURRIED FISH WITH ALMOND PILAF

Serves **4**. Cost per serve: **$4.75**
Time to make: **30 min**

PER SERVE
1891kJ/452cal
Protein 34.9g
Total Fat 9.2g
Sat Fat 1.7g
Carbs 53.3g
Sugars 4.5g
Fibre 6.8g
Sodium 474mg
Calcium 70mg
Iron 3.3mg

1 large brown onion, finely chopped
1 teaspoon turmeric
1 cup basmati rice
2½ cups reduced-salt chicken stock
600g mixed frozen vegetables (peas, beans and broccoli)
4 x Birds Eye SteamFresh Thai Coconut Curry Fish Fillets
1/4 cup slivered almonds, toasted
1/2 cup coriander leaves, plus extra, to garnish

1 Heat one tablespoon olive oil in a large, deep non-stick saucepan over medium heat. Saute onion for four-five minutes, or until soft. Add turmeric; stir for one minute, then stir in rice. Add stock and frozen vegetables; bring to the boil. Reduce heat to low, cover pan and simmer for ten minutes, or until rice has absorbed nearly all the liquid. Switch off heat, cover pan and leave to rest for ten minutes.

2 Meanwhile, microwave fish fillets according to packet instructions. Fluff rice with a fork, then stir in almonds and coriander to make pilaf.

3 Garnish fish with coriander leaves and serve with pilaf.



BEEF STROGANOFF

Serves **4**. Cost per serve: **$4.30**
Time to make: **30 min**

PER SERVE
1898kJ/454cal
Protein 42.9g
Total Fat 7.4g
Sat Fat 3.2g
Carbs 49.1g
Sugars 4.0g
Fibre 6.6g
Sodium 87mg
Calcium 102mg
Iron 4.2mg

250g pappardelle or fettucine
500g beef stir-fry strips
1 brown onion, thinly sliced
1 cup mushrooms, thinly sliced
2 teaspoons paprika
100ml reduced-fat sour cream, plus extra, to serve
4 cups steamed broccolini or green beans, to serve

1 Cook pasta of choice according to packet instructions; drain well.

2 Meanwhile, heat one tablespoon olive oil in a large non-stick frying pan over medium-high heat. Add beef strips in batches and cook for one-two minutes per side, or until browned; transfer to a plate, cover to keep warm and set aside.

3 Add onion to pan and saute until soft. Add mushrooms and paprika; stir for three-four minutes, or until fragrant. Return reserved beef and any juices to pan with three-four tablespoons of water to thin sauce; stir well and bring to the boil. Reduce heat to low, cover pan and simmer for five-six minutes, or until beef is tender and sauce is thick. Remove pan from heat and stir through sour cream.

4 Combine beef stroganoff with pasta and divide among four bowls; top with an extra dollop of sour cream, season with black pepper and serve with steamed greens.

* Serving suggestion: scatter stroganoff with fresh thyme.



Do you need help spring cleaning your diet?
Start planning with your Accredited Practising Dietitian.



BUTTER CHICKEN WITH CHICKPEAS, SPINACH & YOGHURT

PER SERVE
1922kJ/460cal
Protein 34.2g
Total Fat 9.9g
Sat Fat 2.2g
Carbs 54.0g
Sugars 12.4g
Fibre 6.2g
Sodium 307mg
Calcium 105mg
Iron 1.9mg

Serves **4**. Cost per serve: **$5.20**
Time to make: **25 min**

400g chicken breast fillets, chopped
2 x 175g packets Passage Foods Naked Curry Butter Chicken curry base
1 x 400g can no-added-salt chickpeas
1/2 medium head cauliflower, cut into florets
2 cups baby spinach
1/2 cup reduced-fat natural yoghurt, plus extra, to serve
1 x 450g pouch microwavable basmati rice, to serve
Coriander leaves, to garnish

1 Heat two teaspoons olive oil in a large non-stick frying pan over medium-high heat. Add chicken and stir for three-four minutes, or until browned. Add curry base with 1/3 cup water; stir well.

2 Add chickpeas and cauliflower to pan; stir well. Reduce heat to low, cover pan and simmer for about ten minutes, or until chicken cooks through and vegies are tender. Remove pan from heat; stir in baby spinach and yoghurt.

3 Meanwhile, microwave rice according to packet instructions.

4 Divide butter chicken and rice among four bowls, then top with an extra dollop of yoghurt; season with black pepper, garnish with coriander and serve.



BAKED GNOCCHI WITH PUMPKIN & SPINACH

PER SERVE
1591kJ/381cal
Protein 19.2g
Total Fat 9.0g
Sat Fat 4.9g
Carbs 50.7g
Sugars 12.5g
Fibre 8.2g
Sodium 379mg
Calcium 323mg
Iron 5.3mg

Serves **4**. Cost per serve: **$4.50**
Time to make: **30 min**

1 x 500g packet fresh gnocchi
600g butternut pumpkin, peeled, diced into 2cm cubes
350g baby spinach
1 x 500g jar reduced-salt pasta sauce
200g fresh reduced-fat ricotta, crumbled
1/3 cup grated parmesan

1 Preheat oven to 200°C. Cook gnocchi according to packet instructions in a large saucepan of boiling water, then drain well. Return gnocchi to pan; set aside.

2 Meanwhile, microwave or steam pumpkin for five-six minutes, or until tender. Heat two teaspoons olive oil in a large frying pan over medium-high heat. Saute spinach for three-four minutes, or until wilted.

3 Add cooked veg to reserved gnocchi with three-quarters of the pasta sauce; stir well and season with black pepper.

4 Transfer mixture to a large baking dish. Scatter gnocchi with ricotta, top with remaining pasta sauce and sprinkle with parmesan; bake for 15 minutes, or until melted cheese is golden.



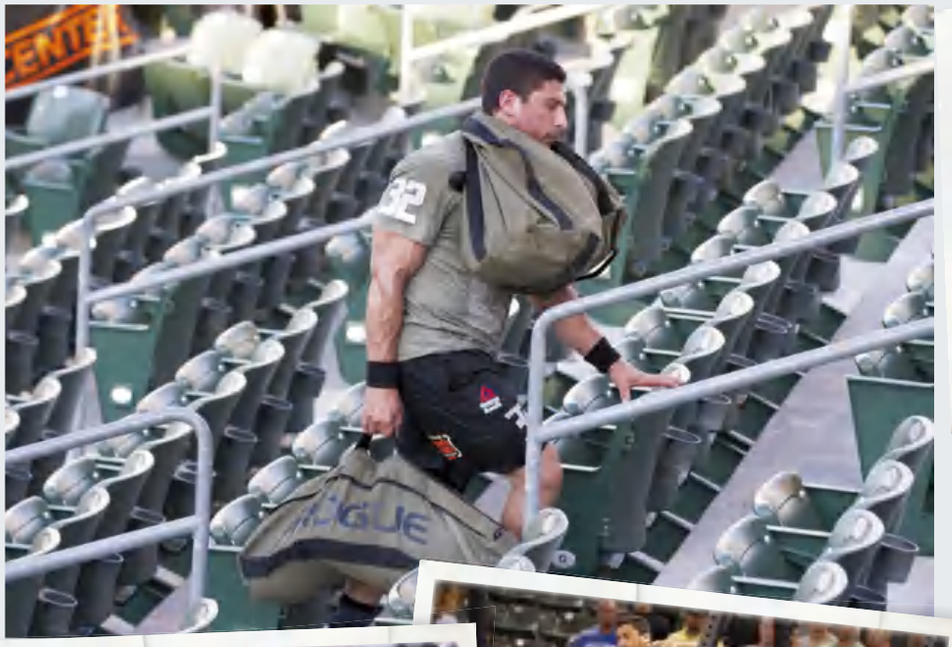
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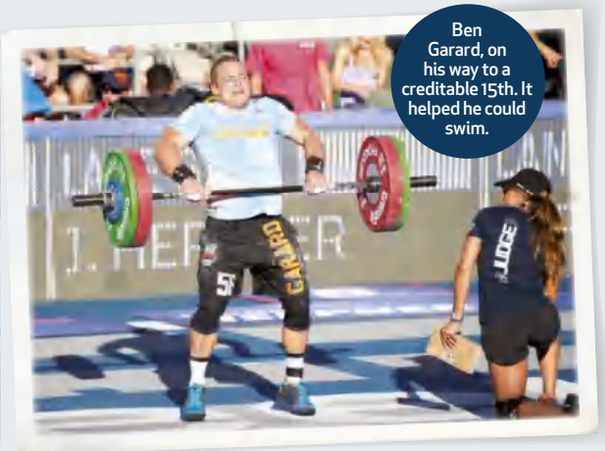
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DAA Dietitians Association of Australia

APD Accredited Practising Dietitian

What is an APD? Accredited Practising Dietitian. APDs are university-qualified experts who can give advice in all areas related to food and nutrition.This includes conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, eating disorders, obesity, food allergies,gastrointestinal disorders and general nutrition advice.





Ben Garard, on his way to a creditable 15th. It helped he could swim.







THIS PAGE
Rob Forte, by name and by nature one of the strongest men in the field. He finished 23rd.

FUN & GAMES

You win the Reebok CrossFit Games, you get to call yourself the Fittest Man or Woman on Earth. Any objections?

Let's be honest: there aren't too many sports where you want to see your competitors do well. But CrossFit IS a sport with a difference, taking the not-so-humble gym workout to Olympian levels. And encouraging a collegiate atmosphere that's quite rare in modern sport – and extremely compelling to watch as a spectator.

But it's something that you can't fully pick up on from the TV coverage (this year on ESPN). Because you don't see it so much on the winners' faces – it's more evident as the backmarkers complete their various assignments, while the winners are being interviewed on screen ... Crowds cheering *everyone* home as if they were champions. Which they all kind of are ... given the punishing regimes they were asked to complete over four days at the recent CrossFit Games in Hermosa Beach, California – the sport's world championships.

For those who have followed our CrossFit series here for the last 12 months, there was special interest as we followed the fortunes of our two "coaches", Kara Webb and Rob Forte. They didn't win, but they sure did their country proud with their Herculean efforts.

The competition started on the Wednesday with a kind of "biathlon" – in this case an ocean swim and two-mile board paddle. Right up the Aussies' alley! Kara *won* the women's, while Rob was among an armada of Aussies who put themselves in the frame to win. Because they











could at least swim! There followed three days of almost-obscene effort – the lugging of multiple sandbags; gymnastics endurance events; running races wearing weighted body armour; insane repetitions and combinations of heavy, heavy lifts; crazy climbs, squats, bikes, rows, obstacle courses, all designed to test every element of an athlete's ability to cope under extreme physical stress.

Last year, after leading into the final stages, Kara succumbed to injury that cruelled her chances – but this year she definitely showed that she more than belongs in this elite company. It just seems to be the technical aspects of the inverted exercises that throw her, with the handstand walk and handstand push-ups finding her out and dropping her down to a final fifth placing.

OUR COACHES DIDN'T WIN, BUT THEY DID THEIR COUNTRY PROUD.

Let's say that again: FIFTH. In the world! BIG.

In case you were wondering, Iceland came first, in the incredible form of Katrin Tanja Davidsdottir. And guess who came second? An Australian rookie: Tia-Clair Toomey, from Gladstone in Queensland. She even won the Rookie of the Year award. She cried when she found out, because she was afraid she wouldn't finish. That's sport, folks.

Rob was again a picture of consistency throughout the event, finishing a more than creditable 23rd. Another Aussie, Ben Garard, managed a terrific 15th. The winner, at his seventh try, was 25-year-old Ben Smith from the good ole USA.

They're all threatening to return next year, joining the half-million people around the world who went through the qualification process trying to get a start. Gotta be in it ...



THIS PAGE Kara Webb led from the start and was right in the running over all four days.

PHOTOS COURTESY *CrossFit*

THE TOUGHTEST TRAINING SHOE JUST GOT TOUGHER
Reebok
UNITED BY FITNESS
CrossFit

STYLE DAD

RIGHT ON TIME

The Astron from SEIKO is a revolutionary timepiece. Connecting to satellites, it pinpoints your location and updates to whatever time zone you have entered. There's no more guessing where the minute hand was when manually changing your watch, because the Astron resets to the correct time to within *one second* ... and will be able to do so for the next 100,000 years. Equipped with a split-time-capability stopwatch that measures six hours in fifth-of-a-second increments, the Astron isn't just suited to the global traveller, but to anyone with a sporty edge. Crafted in stainless steel with SEIKO's black hard coat, the Astron is also scratch-resistant thanks to sapphire glass. It is 100m water-resistant as well, making it built to last. RRP $2,900. Phone 1300 368 546 or visit www.seiko.com.au for more info.



NO MORE TANGLES

Yurbuds' LEAP Wireless in-the-ear earphones offer the signature sweat-proof and comfortable fit of all Yurbuds sport earphones, and best of all, there are no wires to get in your way. They pump out exceptional JBL premium sound and boast a microphone with easy one-touch audio control. With six-plus hours of music and call time, and audible and visible low-battery alerts, these earphones will go with you everywhere. Bluetooth connectivity and a secure fit complete the package. RRP $179.99. To find out more, visit www.yurbuds.com.au





GOT YOU COVERED

If your old man can't have nice things without damaging them, the Backbone Squire will be the perfect gift for him this Father's Day. Featuring a genuine leather strap with a removable press stud cover and screw pins, this watch is durable enough to stand up to the rigours of everyday life. The watch itself is water-resistant to 200m and boasts a stainless steel case, screw crown, fully automatic movement (no need to change the battery ever again), luminous markings on the dial and day/date function. RRP $220. If the Squire isn't to your Dad's style, head to www.backbonetime.com.au to check out the full range. **Enter discount code INSIDE25 to get 25 per cent off your cart* at checkout. (*Does not include shipping).**



SMELL IT LIKE BECKHAM

"No matter how small you start, always dream big." These words have inspired the creation of the English soccer legend's latest fragrance for men, David Beckham Beyond. A new masculine scent captures the bold ambitions and determined spirit of this exceptional man. More words of inspiration: "Go beyond the ordinary; dare to be *extraordinary*." RRP $39 (60ml) and $49 (90ml). Visit www.chemistwarehouse.com.au to find out more.



FAN DAD



ACCA DACCA

Get dad fired up this Father's Day (and for their Australian tour in November) by treating him to the latest album from the biggest rock band in the world, AC/DC. From Sony music, this gem features the hits *Rock Or Bust* and *Play Ball*. RRP $24.99. Visit www.sony.com.au for more info. (Tour tickets on sale now!)

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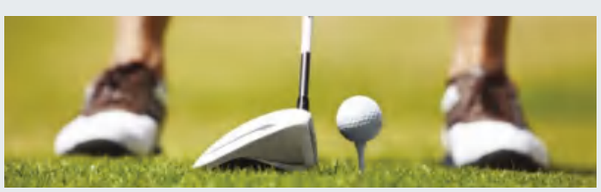
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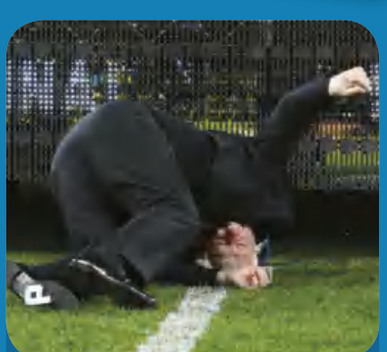
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July's Freeze Frame Freebies caption competition winner was Barry Scolnik of Balgownie, NSW.

Email your entries for this month's Freeze Frame comp on page 22 to iscomps@insidesport.com.au, or check out the website: www.insidesport.com.au. If, however, you are still "analogue", and resist the march of technology, you can still post your entries the traditional way to Freeze Frame Comp, Inside Sport, PO Box 5555, St Leonards, NSW 1590.

For enquiries about this section, please contact Hamish Bayliss at hbayliss@nextmedia.com.au

QUIZ ANSWERS (P28)

1. Spanish (Garbine Muguruza)
2. Five (1958, 1962, 1970, 1994 and 2002)
3. Omega
4. Rohan Dennis
5. Wheelchair rugby
6. Eleven
7. 1996
8. Julian Wilson
9. 1976 (Montreal)
10. 2000-2002

ANSWER TO NEXT (PAGE 28)

The umpires looked at their light meters and called the match a draw, to boos from the crowd.

ADDICTED TO SPORT?

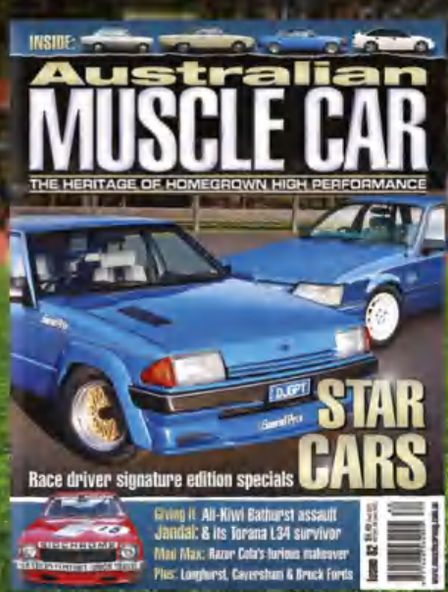












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BRENDAN EDWARDS

This physical educational teacher didn't just help the Hawks out with their fitness, he changed the way Aussie rules clubs trained forever.

ELSEWHERE in this month's issue, we give due praise to the Hawthorn AFL club. Since their first premiership in 1961, the Hawks' star has never really waned. They've now won 12, and played in 18 grand finals. And their current renaissance can *still* be attributed to a system and an attitude that was instituted long ago.

Hawthorn coaches, like Kennedy, Jeans, Parkin and now Clarkson, have become legends. They have made a point of recruiting judiciously, sometimes unconventionally. They've produced some of the best footballers of the modern era and made great players out of men who might not otherwise have been considered so.

Most of their success can be traced back to John Kennedy, their coach throughout the 1960s and '70s. But the seeds were planted *before* the Kennedy era, when they were coached by an ex-Carlton man, Jack Hale, whose secret weapon was embedded within his team. That weapon's name was Brendan Edwards. Edwards was more than a mere player. He was also the brains behind the avant-garde fitness regimes of the Hawthorn sides when he played, and for years after he retired.

Considering the brevity of his career (109 games), Edwards was a magnificently accomplished footballer. He collected accolades and awards the entire time he played. He was flamboyant, energetic – a jack-in-the-box. Edwards would not only have slotted comfortably into a modern side (he was such a talented possession winner, such a relentless driver), he'd have *dominated* today's game.

When Edwards, a physical education teacher, was recruited for 50 pounds, he immediately had team-mates dumbfounded. His fitness regime consisted of rapid, high-energy "circuits" of push-ups, knee jumps, sit-ups, chin-ups and other exercises ... all done with boundless energy. His aerobic capacity was voluminous before anyone even knew what "aerobic" meant. With explosive strength, he was able to shrug off tacklers and burst away, kicking at full speed. But the most striking thing about him was the way he *finished* a game – fresh as the moment he began.

Hale never won a premiership with Hawthorn, but he was the man who instilled the tough "Carlton" attitude at a club with a patchy history. Seeing the immense value of Edwards' methods, Hale announced a new "scientifically based" regime. Kennedy, who was still a player, Alf Hughes and Graham Arthur went straight to the source, Edwards, seeking to attain his astronomical fitness level. Edwards happily obliged. Arthur, Kennedy and Hughes all had outstanding seasons the next year. Eventually, in 1959, Edwards introduced his regime to the entire team at Hale's behest.

When Kennedy became coach in 1960, Edwards was still in the team. Kennedy now understood the benefits of superior fitness, and soon it characterised his side to such an extent they became known as "Kennedy's commandos" – a group so fit they'd run opponents off their legs; so strong they'd win with muscle what they couldn't with skill.

In 1961, when the Hawks won their break-through premiership, they were not necessarily the best side. The grand final was scrappy, but this allowed Hawthorn to impose its physicality. The Bulldogs flagged as the arm-wrestle proceeded and Hawthorn's superior endurance and ability to think and execute late in the game helped it to pull away. It was the genesis of "pressure football".

Edwards led the way. He amassed 33 kicks, but his sheer presence was outstanding. He was everywhere, irrepressible, a colossus – a colossus weighing 75kg and 178cm tall. It was one of the most dominant solo efforts in grand final history. He was clearly the best on the ground, daylight second. What's more, after the final siren, he looked as though he could do it all *again*.

To everyone's shock, Edwards retired at the start of the next season to develop his fitness centres. Other teams were quick to pounce on Kennedy's methods, and his team, not over-endowed with experience, slipped. Edwards was coaxed into coming back in 1963, and he himself was convinced he was about to attain a new level as a player when he badly dislocated a knee against Richmond. His career was over. Still, the Hawks were able to make the grand final that year.

Kennedy himself sat out the next few years to concentrate on his "real" career as a school principal (times certainly have changed!), but returned as coach in 1967. The first man he approached for assistance was Edwards and in



Coach John Kennedy is immortalised in bronze at Waverley Oval.

PHOTO BY *Getty Images*



EDWARDS' AEROBIC CAPACITY WAS VOLUMINOUS BEFORE ANYONE EVEN KNEW WHAT "AEROBIC" MEANT.



Brendan Edwards [front right] and coach John Kennedy [front, Hawthorn jumper] lead the Hawks in pre-season training at Bulleen in 1968.

1968 they worked together to refine the circuit training methods which had now become more sophisticated and well-known.

Of course Edwards, a fitness professional, was well ahead of the curve. He designed a "commando" course at a farm in Bulleen. Twice weekly in the 1968 pre-season, the Hawks would lug sandbags over hills, cross the Yarra swinging or shimmying on ropes, carry bricks in each hand as they ran and crawled through pipes.

The fitness levels they cumulatively acquired were a factor in their 1971 grand final win over St Kilda. In cold, muddy conditions, Hawthorn was behind by 20 points at the last exchange. It had been a low-scoring game, and there was no indication the Hawks would make up such a deficit in the circumstances. Again, their fitness and toughness told in the last-quarter ten-goal slugfest, and they got up by seven points. Hawthorn more than doubled its score in that quarter, even though St Kilda scored 18 points. St Kilda's coach, Allan Jeans, lamented after the game that "the season was just 25 minutes too long".

Edwards' legacy continued. The triumph of 1971 led to the successes of the rest of the decade, in which they played four grand finals and won another two. These outstanding finishes set the platform for the Hawthorn Hawks legend which has not diminished to this day.

Edwards returned to his health clubs, and the business of introducing the concept of aerobic fitness to Australia. His impact on a game as a player is often understated, as was his influence on the game. As spirited and colourful as ever, he was asked a few years ago how he'd go nowadays as a player. He replied, "I would fit in quite well. It would *suit* me. I would do it easy and rack up countless possessions."

As Muhammad Ali once said, it's not bragging if you can back it up.

– Robert Drane

ABOVE PHOTO BY *Newspix*





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MARIKA SHAPIRO is a big St Kilda fan, so winning the June Fox Sports WOW Card competition posed an instant dilemma – NOT! Her first task was to choose ANY AFL game to attend, which just so happened to be her beloved Sainters up against the reigning premiers Hawthorn back on June 7. Unfortunately it was a big win for the Hawks, but the Fox Footy team found a way to cheer her up: after the game Marika and her son were driven by Harley Davidson motorcycles straight to the Fox Footy studios, where they were given a tour and got to watch the live recording of *Bounce*, as well as meeting the all-star cast.

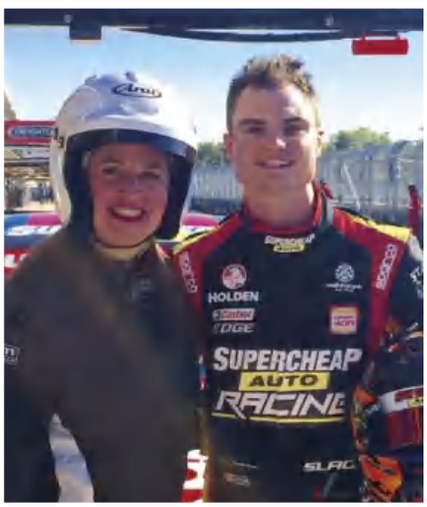
How do you follow up a day like that? Well, you step on a plane and fly to Darwin for three days to watch the V8 Supercars tear it up. Begin with a hot lap on the Friday with Supercheap Auto Racing driver Tim Slade, then on Saturday and Sunday soak up the service in the VIP Paddock Club, take a pit walk, get introduced to Craig Lowndes, Garth Tander and all the other V8 drivers ... Then throw in a bit of showbiz, getting interviewed on Fox Sports and meeting Jess Yates, Mark Skaife and Russell Ingall in the Fox Sports commentary box ...

How do you follow THAT up? Take a breath, sports fans. Next up, Wimbledon. Marika then flew to London for 12 days, three of which were courtside at The Championships, while also experiencing the exclusive hospitality of the Gatsby Club – cocktails, seafood platters etc ...

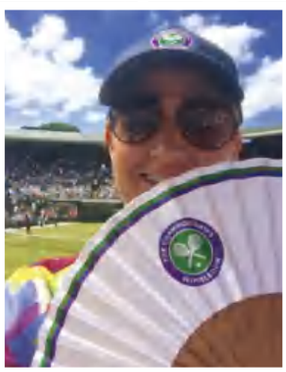
Back on earth after a month like that, Marika was understandably blissed out. "This has been the trip of a lifetime! Thank you all again. We had the best time and it's just something we would never have been able to consider. We truly appreciate the experience!

"That V8 hot lap was incredible! Wimbledon was amazing! I've had so much fun! It's been a crazy month, it's been an unexpected month and it's been a sensational month. Thank you so much!"















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Fancy putting yourself in the picture? There is a seriously amazing prize going off EVERY MONTH. Coming up, lucky Wow Card winners will be jetting off to the US Open Tennis, the F1 Etihad Airways Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, the World Surfing League Pipeline Masters, the Rugby World Cup in the UK, plus the 2015 Toyota AFL Premiership Finals Series.

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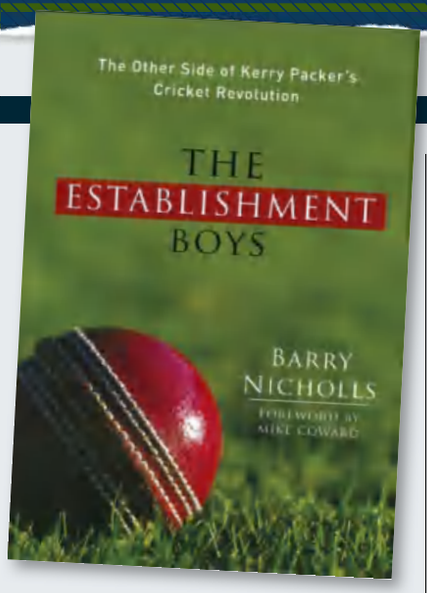
TIME AND SPACE

BY JAMES COVENTRY, ABC BOOKS, $32.99

With laments about congestion, skill levels or rules inconsistencies so commonly heard across the AFL these days, it's useful to have some broad perspective. And this book certainly provides it, a historical survey of how the domestic code has evolved from a scratch game in a park into the chaos theory of modern football. Taking a leaf from *Inverting The Pyramid,* Jonathan Wilson's superb history of soccer tactics, *Time And Space* goes back to the very origins of the sport to examine its conceptual underpinnings from the late 19th century. The picture that emerges is a supremely adaptive game, particularly when compared to soccer, which finds it far more difficult to change its rules or playing conditions. Author James Coventry's best contribution is to take a broader view of this ever-shifting landscape. Where Victoria has usually espoused a rugged, direct-playing ethos, it was left to South Australia (where Coventry hails from) and Western Australia to become seedbeds for footy innovation, producing figures such as Jack Oatey and Gerard Neesham to disrupt established norms.

– Jeff Centenera ★★★★





THE ESTABLISHMENT BOYS

BY BARRY NICHOLLS, NEW HOLLAND, $35

My old history teacher made the distinction: if the overthrow succeeds, it's a revolution, and if it fails, it's a rebellion. The changes wrought by World Series Cricket in the late 1970s have accordingly been termed the Packer revolution, even if the Australian Cricket Board survived in some form to this day. Now encased in a post-Kerry, made-for-TV nostalgia, the WSC's rebels (or is it revolutionaries?) very much fell on the right side of history. *The Establishment Boys* redresses the imbalance for the 23 loyalist cricketers of 1977-79, who did happen to play 24 Tests over five series, which have been conveniently forgotten. Part of the reason was lack of success – three series and 13 matches were lost, including a brutal home Ashes 5-1 hammering to Mike Brearley's England. Nicholls, who was a grade cricketer in South Australia, has a sympathetic eye for the lesser lights of this period, many of whom might have had lasting success in a more conventional time. The toughest break of all was the realisation: having achieved every Aussie boy's dream to wear a baggy green, how must it have felt to get there just as it was being devalued in an unprecedented way?

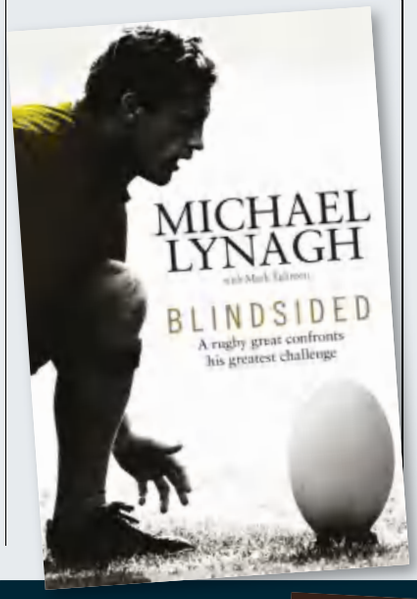
– JC ★★★★

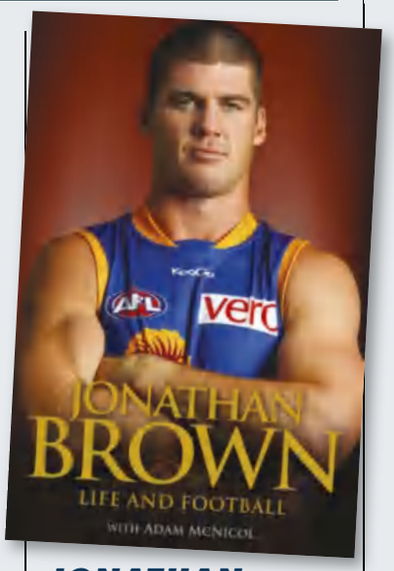
BLINDSIDED

BY MICHAEL LYNAGH WITH MARK EGLINTON, HARPER COLLINS, $29.99

As a World Cup winner and captain of the Wallabies, Michael Lynagh scaled considerable sporting heights. Among the Australian personalities of his era such as David Campese, Nick Farr-Jones and Alan Jones, the man known as Noddy was the humble, quiet one with a bent for introspection. These qualities come to the fore in *Blindsided,* which is a searching examination of a sportsman's mind. Lynagh's earlier biography had been published in 1995, which didn't encompass his final act for the Wallabies at the World Cup in South Africa, or his remaining days in the newly minted professional era or his transition to retirement. But the motivating force for this book is the stroke Lynagh suffered in 2012, and his subsequent recovery. Such an experience would make many people take stock – put into words by one as thoughtful as Lynagh makes for a fascinating read.

– JC ★★★★





JONATHAN BROWN: LIFE AND FOOTBALL

BY JONATHAN BROWN WITH ADAM MCNICOL, MICHAEL JOSEPH/PENGUIN, $45

Jonathan Brown was a footballing archetype: a big and big-playing country bloke who became one of the defining players of the Brisbane Lions' powerhouse of the early 2000s. After landing his third premiership in his fourth season at the age of 22, Brown played another 11 years, and by his repeated admission, would've played forever if he could. The end to his celebrated career showed just how hard it was for him to walk away – Brown became the poster boy for the new consciousness about brain trauma, as his hard-edged style of play led to a gruesome injury toll over the course of his career. A footballing life, in all its toughness.

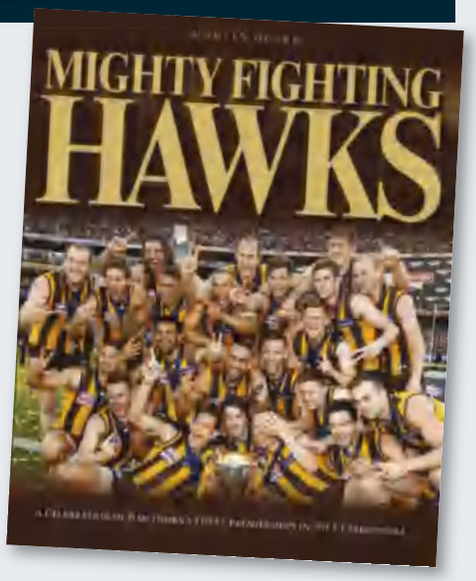
– JC ★★★

MIGHTY FIGHTING HAWKS

BY MARTIN BLAKE, MICHAEL JOSEPH/PENGUIN, $49.99

Whether they win this September or not, Hawthorn has established itself as a bona fide dynasty, with three flags in six years putting this group alongside celebrated Hawks eras in the '70s and '80s. Martin Blake, a former *Age* journalist who wrote a similar examination of the Sydney Swans' recent success, once again tries to unravel the mystery of a winning club culture. Hawthorn is not to the manor born among AFL clubs – not foundational like its Melbourne peers, in serious danger of merger in the mid-'90s, and down and out as late as 2004. How the turnaround was engineered, led by Alastair Clarkson from the coach's box, Luke Hodge and Sam Mitchell on the field, and Jeff Kennett and Andrew Newbold in the boardroom, is testament to a club that has taken all the hard steps – even if that 2008 grand final win looks a little premature in retrospect. Blake, for one, disagrees: "Hawthorn's premiership in 2008 was *not* stolen from Geelong."

– JC ★★★★



WHAT WE WERE SAYING 18 YEARS AGO (in Sept 1997)

● Cheeky Martina Hingis may be number one on the rankings list, but some rivals resent her arrogance. When asked what becoming the youngest-ever winner of a Grand Slam tournament mean to her, the 16-year-old replied dismissively: "It's just another record. I mean, I have so many records already" ... But cocksure American Venus Starr Williams insists she'll dethrone Hingis, and then face the toughest competition from her super-athletic sister Serena. She even crows: "I could go beyond number one because there are times when an athlete is just ahead of the rest of the league. That could be me" ... The undisputed queen bitch of the brat pack, however, is 16-year-old Russian Anna Kournikova. "Anna is a goddamn Dennis Rodman all over again," says her noted coach Nick Bollettieri.
The Ego Has Landed by Paul Fein

● Could it *really* have been only 1995 that rugby was poking along with its niche share of a fragmented Queensland and NSW football market? ... Overnight, a game essentially fuelled by honorary contributions and the energy of volunteers had changed currency. A decade ago, half a dozen people could run the NSW Rugby Union – these heady days, it takes about 45. At the other end of the scale, there's the Australian skipper John Eales, wearing different brands of boots depending on whether he's sporting the colours of the Queensland Reds' jumper or the green and gold. Er, sorry, that should read green, gold and white. Reebok bought the Wallaby jumper, too.
Passing The Buck by Jamie Walter

● The Hawks went on to win the '83 grand final by a then-record margin of 83 points. That match is *still* having a sizable impact on football: a remarkable seven of the 20 who played for Hawthorn that afternoon have gone on to become senior coaches: Gary Ayres, Ken Judge, Terry Wallace, Rodney Eade, Peter Knights, Gary Buckenara and Leigh Matthews ... How did one team produce so many coaches of senior league standard? The common thread that tied them together was one man, Allan Jeans – a wizened old cop who, despite strategies which had taken a stranglehold on coaching, believed that football was the simplest game of all.
A Coach's Class by Garry Linell







● Athens will be the first $2b Olympics, with half the cash coming from Greece's partners in the European Union, much of it to be spent on major non-sporting infrastructure projects, such as roads and a new cross-city subway ... "The 2004 preparations are turning into a theatre of the absurd," said Fanny Palli-Petralia, opposition spokesperson on the Olympics. "People here will be paying for the Games on their taxes for the next 25 years."
Big Fat Greek Fiasco by Steven Downes



WHAT WE WERE SAYING 12 YEARS AGO (in Sept 2003)

● Our task is to examine the contortionist acts clubs go through when finalising their 25-man squads. How do you create a champion NRL team? Exactly who's allowed in and who's left on the street is the $3.25m question ... Players talk. To each other. About money. About *each other's* money. And that alone can be the cause of enormous angst. "Players get shitty when the pecking order isn't right," observes Penrith chief executive Shane Richardson. "They're not going to mind if the guy next to him is doing the same job and on $5000 more. But they do mind if they're doing the same job and he's getting $10,000 more."
Robo Cap by Andrew Webster

● In what five-time Australian Touring Car champ Mark Skaife has admitted can be a "mongrel, gutter-rat business", Craig Lowndes wears the chalkiest of white hats: an uncomplicated person in a complicated sport, an apolitical creature in a political business, a man for whom kith and kin surpass on the scale of values ... Expectation of his permanent return to the podium still hangs heavy over the paddocks and spectator mounds. What will we be saying in years to come? Perhaps the last words should belong to John Bowe, the man Lowndes succeeded as V8 champion in '96. "This FPR's going to be good for him in the long term. I can see him being at the forefront of Australian touring car racing for another 20 years if he wants to be."
The Saintly Assassin by Richard Lindstrom

● David Beckham's move from Man U to Real Madrid was a depressing episode in football history, on a number of scores. One, it showed that loyalty counts for nothing any more.
State Of Play

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Parting Shot

Was James Bond the inspiration for the Chinese synchro swim pair's routine? Xuechen Huang and Wenyan Sun came back from Russia with love, as they ended up with the silver medal in the duet technical category at the FINA World Championships in Kazan.

PHOTO BY *Clive Rose / Getty Images*

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BY JEFF CENTENERA

ILLUSTRATION BY Christopher Nielsen

THE FINALS WORD

WHY DO OUR FOOTBALL CODES SPEND ALL WINTER PLAYING WEEK IN, WEEK OUT BEFORE DECIDING THE CHAMPIONS AFTER ONLY A FEW WEEKS OF FINALS? HERE ARE A FEW ALTERNATIVES ...

This time of year brings the end of our footy season, but also the *start* of England's, which revives a long-running conversation I have with an English mate of mine. "Why is it," he asks, "that your rugby league and AFL play all season, *then* have one month where they determine the champion?"

To my friend, more familiar with league tables and relegation battles, the notion of finals footy was illogical, unfair, perverse even. And the more I consider his confusion, the more I think that he's right. Why doesn't the longer part of the season with all of the teams, rather than the bit at the end with *half* of them, determine the ultimate victors?

It might be the biggest backhanded compliment in sports: "minor premiers" or "regular-season champs". It wasn't always the case. In the old days of the VFL and NSWRL, the minor premier had a privilege known as the right of challenge. Effectively, it was a prehistoric version of the double-chance – the minor premier could lose in a semi or a final, and still have the right to play the winner in a "grand" final. This system lasted until 1931 in Victoria, and 1954 in NSW.

For all the bellyaching that goes on these days about "identifying the best team", fact is that finals do accord rather neatly with our modern mindset. Why pay attention all year when you can just wait for September? It's always fun to watch the reaction of those passionate footy fans who sweat every detail of the season, only to watch the pointillist picture of the home-and-away get painted over in a weekend. I know a Victorian guy who is still bitter about how the Adelaide Crows did this in 1997, and had the gall to do it again the next year.

Or in another sense, finals footy is perhaps the natural extension of an education culture in which tests and exams have proliferated. But as every educator knows, the test environment is neither the only nor the best way to measure proficiency. And seeing how footballers are under such pressure these days, maybe reducing end-of-year stress will be good for player welfare. So instead of finals, maybe our codes should consider the following ...

Take-home finals: Every team gets to play their elimination game on their home ground. And seeing how these types of tests have absolutely no oversight, these games should be played without a referee or umpire. Somehow, the North Queensland Cowboys would probably find a way to inexplicably lose this game.

Multiple choice: Kenneth McIntyre's greatest legacy was:

a) Mayor of Box Hill

Claiming the Portuguese discovered Australia

nventing a finals system in which semis are played before preliminary finals

All of the above.

g books: This is a good one. Instead of having to play matches, each team will fill out a log of activities that every championship-level side should be good at. Think KPIs, but better. Of course, each team will claim they've done 100 hours when they've actually done much less.

Thesis defence: After the games end, every coach/captain/leadership group has to front a panel of experts and justify why their season turned out the way it did. This sort've *already* happens, but imagine what kind of riveting television it could make if, say, James Hird was made to answer such questions. Every club would have to hire PhDs experienced at this thing – even ones in the *liberal arts*.

p quizzes: Instead of bunching them at the end, spring surprise finals weeks throughout the year. Think golf or tennis with their majors.

Peer vote: We all love democracy, right? So why don't we get the players and coaches to vote on who they thought was the best team of the year? This was the way that American college football determined its champion, until recently. And the first World Series of Poker champion, Johnny s in 1970, was determined not by crazy all-ins or cash won, but by vote of the players in the main event. As the lore tells it, the eight men at the table were polled as to who they thought the best player was. They all voted for *themselves*, so they voted again, on the question as to who was *second-best*, and Moss came out top. As it would happen, Moss won the '71 World Series under the now-established rules, no vote required. Nothing minor premier about *that* ...



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